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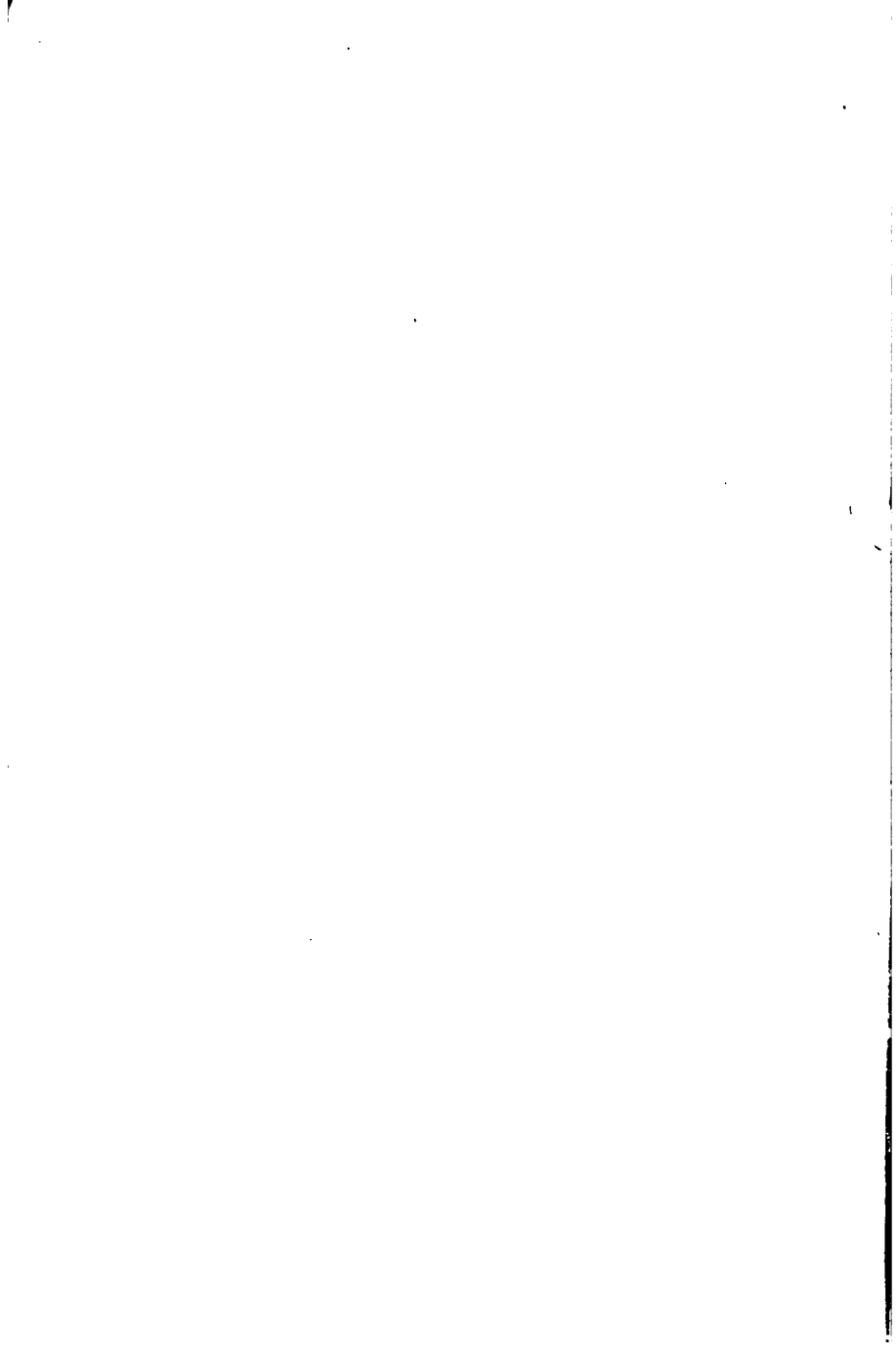


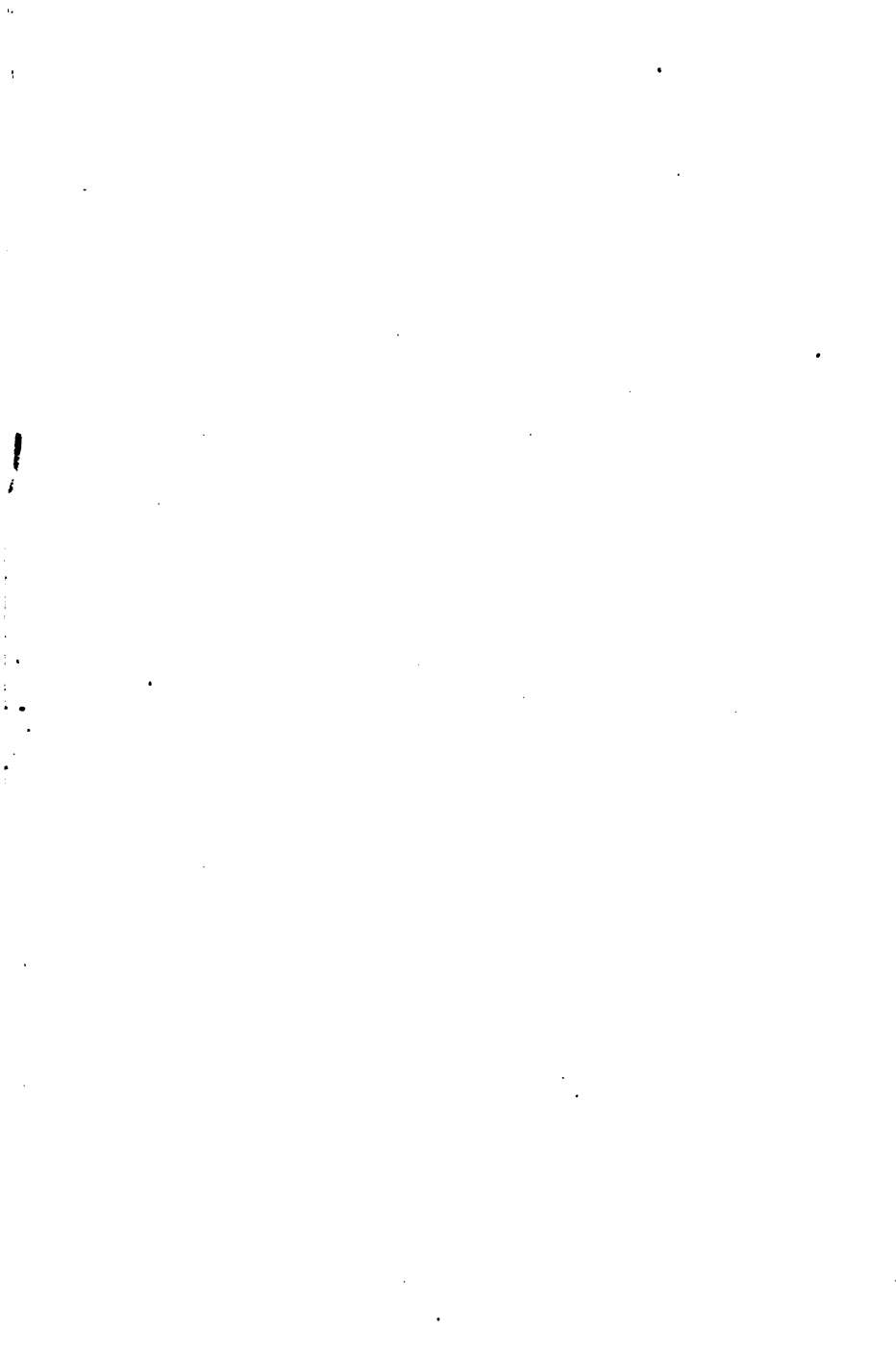
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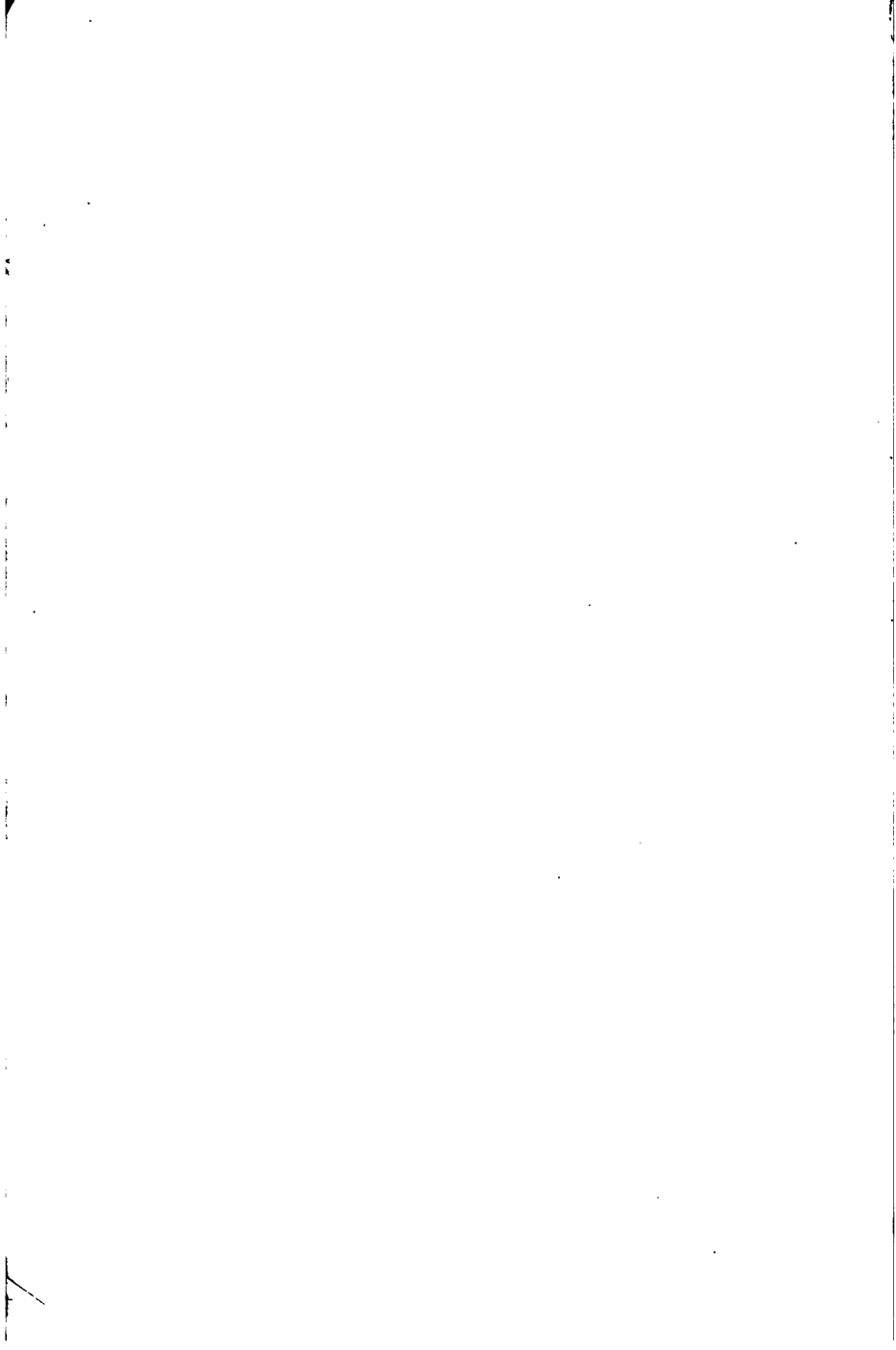
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John J. Lick

Sept 10 1914.







# **SUCCESS AT GOLF**









FRANCIS OUIMET, UNITED STATES OPEN CHAMPION, 1913.  
*Frontispiece.*

# SUCCESS AT SEA

BY

HARRY VARIEN, ALLEN NEAL,  
GEORGE DUNCAN, WILLIAM WELLS,  
LAWRENCE E. AYTON,  
AND  
FRANCIS O'NEIL  
*U. S. Officers in Service.*

*With an Introduction by*

JOHN G. ENDRISON  
*Commander, U. S. Navy, U. S. S. Albatross*

*Illustrated*

BOSTON  
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY  
1914



# SUCCESS AT GOLF

BY

HARRY VARDON, ALEXANDER HERD

GEORGE DUNCAN, WILFRID REID

LAWRENCE AYTON

AND

FRANCIS OUMET

*U. S. Open Champion, 1913*

*With an Introduction by*

JOHN G. ANDERSON

*Runner-up National Championship, 1913*

*Illustrated*



BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1914

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HERE is no game in which inherent ability counts for more than it does in golf; yet there is no game which, in the long run, demands a more intimate knowledge of cause and effect. The youth goes out on the links and, through elasticity of muscles, a keen eye, inborn adaptability and the favors of fortune, he triumphs over a veteran golfer of the first rank, or over a field involving a number of veteran experts. He is hailed as a golfing "phenom"; a great future is predicted for him on the links and it is forecasted that in time he is more than likely to become a national champion.

For a time his play seems to promise



## INTRODUCTION

fulfillment of these rosy prognostications; but there comes a day when things begin to go wrong. The drive no longer follows a straight line down the course, but takes a fancy toward the rough on the right or left; the iron shots are not hit in the old crisp and decisive manner; it seems impossible to get the old distance with the old absence of effort. . Something undeniably is wrong; but what?

There is the rub for the purely natural golfer who has not studied cause and effect in golf. He knows something has gone wrong with his game, but what it is, he has not the remotest idea. He does not realize, perhaps, that he unconsciously has altered his stance or that his original methods of hitting the ball were so unorthodox as to depend for their success upon the supreme suppleness and keen eye of youth. He has days when things go right and he thinks he is back

## INTRODUCTION

on his game; when lo! the very next day his play is woefully bad and he comes to think of himself as irremediably erratic, whereupon he loses that confidence in his own abilities which spells success.

The above is far from being an isolated case, especially in America. Nevertheless, in America the general standard of play is progressing by leaps and bounds, and the chief reason is that golfers, as a class, are giving more and more study to the science of the game. They are growing more observant of the methods of the leading golfers, both amateur and professional, and they are more ready to read what the experts have to say about how different shots should be played.

To my mind there could be nothing more timely and beneficial for golf in the United States than the accompanying expressions of world-famous golfers

## INTRODUCTION

on the proper method of playing strokes in which they are known to excel. The success of Mr. Francis Ouimet (who has contributed a chapter) in winning the national open championship of 1913 has fired the ambitions of American golfers and makes them doubly receptive of ideas which are bound to help them master the finer points of the game.

That the ensuing chapters are contributed almost exclusively by British golfers is not surprising, considering what such names as Harry Vardon, George Duncan, Alexander Herd et al. stand for in the world of golf. It will be a long time before even the highest standard of golf will advance beyond the point already reached by a man like Vardon, for the simple reason that for years his skill has been ahead of the age in which his triumphs have been so many, just as Tom Morris, Jr., and "Freddie" Tait

## INTRODUCTION

knew no peers in their day. But study of the game and continual striving undeniably is bridging the chasm between a player like Vardon and the next order of golfers, and one of the potent reasons for this improvement in the general standard unquestionably lies in the ability of men like Vardon to not only play the game superbly but to be able to analyze and tell in print the secret of their success.

All except one of the chapters in "Success in Golf" are contributed by British experts, yet the opinions set forth are by no means confined to golfers who are known to Americans solely through reputations. Harry Vardon, George Duncan, Alexander Herd and Wilfrid Reid are four contributors who have played in the United States and are known to hosts of golfers this side of the Atlantic. And when I say known, I mean known

## INTRODUCTION

not only personally, but known to be masters of the shots which they describe how to play.

When a man like Harry Vardon sets out to explain how to get the best results in driving, for example, every one knows that there is no golfer more skilled in that department of play. Not alone does he get the best results; he gets them through methods which embody skill, grace and total absence of palpable effort. I know of no book or treatise where the beauties and advantages of spoon play are more instructively or clearly set forth than in this little volume. And when you have read all other articles about the "push shot," you will come back to George Duncan's explanation as given in these pages and know once and forever what it is and how to play it.

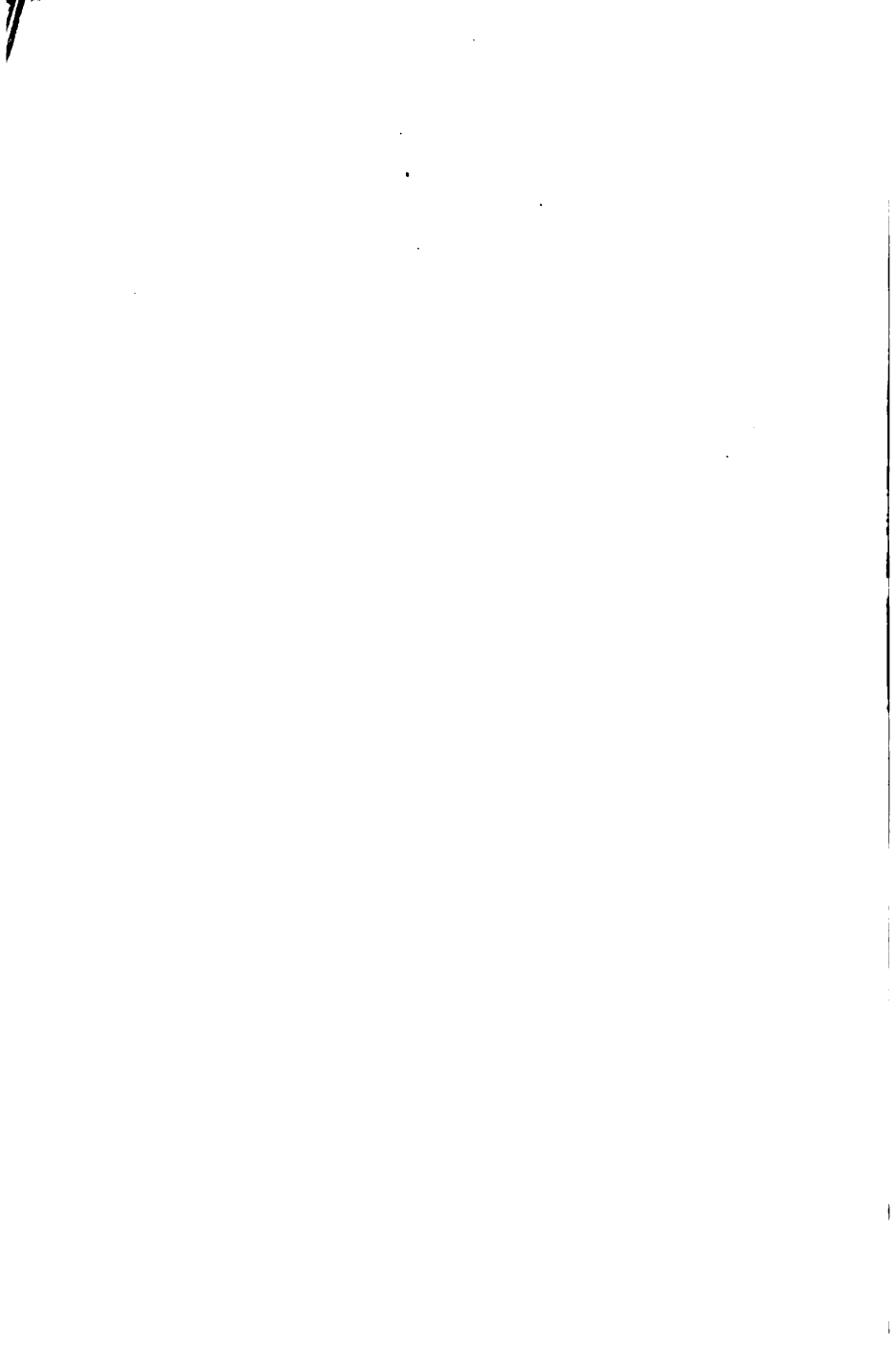
If you wish to excel in that most delicate part of the game, putting, heed the

## INTRODUCTION

advice of the young champion, Mr. Francis Ouimet, whose views on what he thinks are the best methods to employ undoubtedly will help a host of golfers.

I commend this book to all golfers who would improve their game.

JOHN G. ANDERSON.



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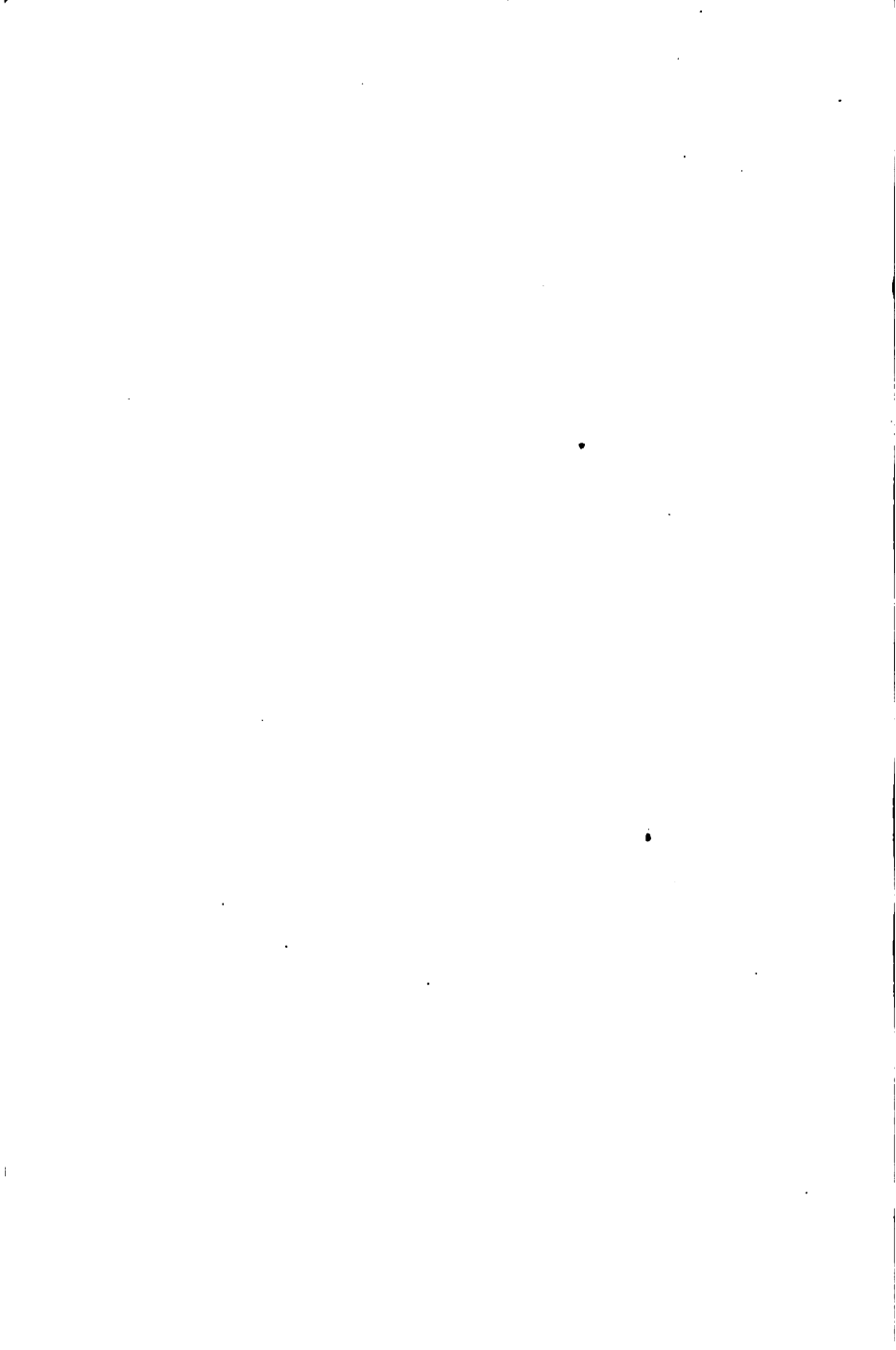
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**THE ART OF DRIVING**

**BY**

**HARRY VARDON**



# SUCCESS AT GOLF

## THE ART OF DRIVING

**I**T has been said that the successful driving of a golf ball is a knack. The statement may be true, but I am certain that the only way to acquire the knack is to study the art, and that mental capacity cannot afford greater assistance to physical strength than by allotting to the latter its proper and rather modest place in the scheme of the tee-shot.

A long drive is not usually made purely by virtue of hard hitting. There are a few men — veritable golfing goliaths, and good luck to them! — who depend mainly upon what we may term “brute

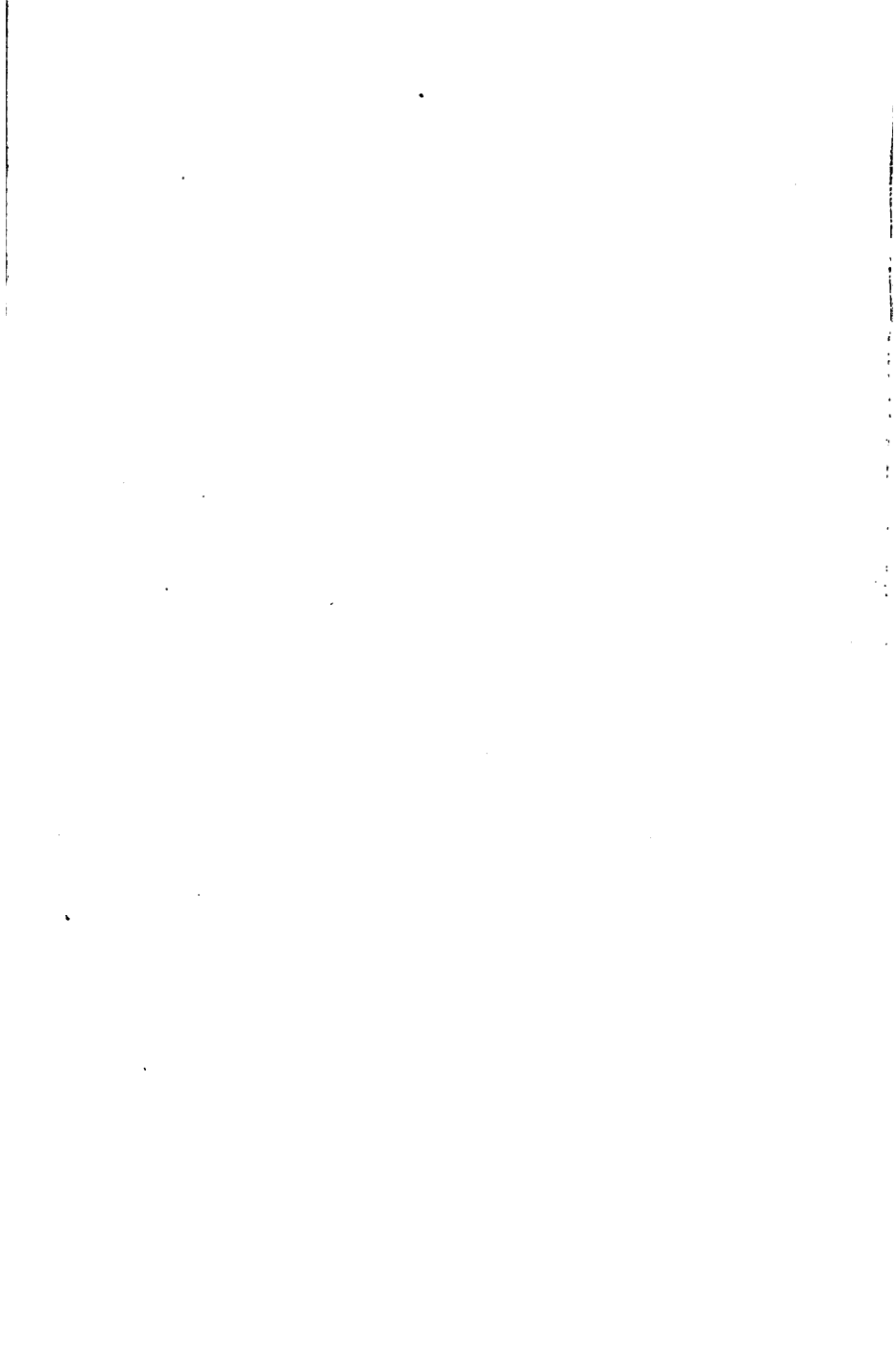
## SUCCESS AT GOLF

strength" for the admirable length of their drives. They slog for all they are worth; they time the shots well; and, as a consequence, they make the ball travel great distances. They are gifted souls. What the average moderate player does not realize (so, at least, it seems to me after many years of experience) is that Nature never intended him to be a slogger. He is not endowed for the part. And yet he persists in trying to play it. He seems to make up his mind during the preliminary waggle that the most important matter of all is to give the ball a terrific thump. He tightens all his muscles in his determination to accomplish a mighty shot. That is just where he fails. I can assure him that this constricted condition of the muscles, which is easily cultivated in the case of the man who thinks that physical power and hefty hitting are of supreme importance, is the



**HARRY VARDON.**





## THE ART OF DRIVING

worst thing imaginable for the purpose of long driving.

As a rule, it produces a fozzle. What happens is easily explained. The player induces such a state of rigidity in his resolve to hit with desperate force that he simply cannot swing the club freely. The muscles of his arms are so contracted in the vehement desire to triumph by means of strength that the victim cannot go through with the shot. What he usually does — unwittingly, but none the less surely — is to begin to stop the club before it reaches the ball. His arms are not sufficiently free to allow the driver to do the work for him. And as he starts involuntarily to check the club, he endeavors to use all his bodily strength; in a way, he hurls himself at the ball. It is a curious fact that, in spite of the employment of so much energy, one is not likely to send the ball 150 yards when

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

adopting these methods. It may be struck fairly, cleanly, but there is no real power behind it. One of the most common mistakes of the indifferent golfer is that he makes downright hard work of driving. The practice is not merely useless; it renders a long shot a rarity except in the case of an exceptionally constituted individual.

In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that there is no necessity to invest the stroke with any strength at all. The power must be there, but it must be inveigled into exercising its influence at the right instant. What I wish to indicate is that it is not likely to be brought into profitable operation by mere violence on the part of the player; that is to say, by a desperate tightening of the muscles and a mere lunging of the body at the ball. A first-class golfer who executes a long tee-shot uses in the process most, if

## THE ART OF DRIVING

not all, of the strength that Nature has given him, — but he uses it in such a way that he scarcely realizes that he is hitting hard, and, indeed, the strain for him is not so great as for the man who is fiercely workmanlike. This, then, is the knack of successful driving, and the only way to master it is to study the swing, which is the art of golf. And I venture to say that there is no reason why anybody should be incapable of learning sufficient about that art to enable him to drive tolerably well. People vary in their aptitude for games, but the main principles of the golf swing are so clear that their assimilation is largely a matter of perseverance.

For the man who is endeavoring to acquire a knowledge of how to drive I always recommend the use of the brassie. Its stiffer shaft renders it easier to control than the driver and the slight loft

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

on its face imparts confidence. The simpler the task can be made at the outset, or when one is off one's driving and practising in the hope of remedying the defect, the more rapid is likely to be the progress. Having secured satisfactory results with the brassie, there ought to be no difficulty in doing equally well with the driver, since the two clubs are (or, at any rate, most certainly should be) of the same length and the same "lie."

As to the stance, let it be as natural and unconstrained as possible. The toes should point outwards, and it is best, I think, to have the right foot a few inches in front of the left. Certainly it is bad to have the left foot in front of the right, although I have seen people stand in that manner. It almost precludes the possibility of a proper finish. There are golfers, too, who stand exceedingly straddle-legged, and others who have

## THE ART OF DRIVING

their feet too close together. All these points are worthy of consideration; there is a kind of "happy medium" about the character of the correct stance, the idea of which can be conveyed better by illustration than by the written word.

I daresay that every student of the game has heard that the main secret of the successful up-swing is to screw the body from the hips and keep the head still instead of allowing the body to sway. All the same, I feel that this point cannot be emphasized too frequently or too strongly, for it is certain that there are thousands of golfers who, even though they have been told that it is the principle of ninety-nine good players in every hundred, do not give to it the attention it deserves. Probably the explanation is that they think they are performing the correct thing when, all the while, they are swaying in a way which completely

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

upsets their balance and renders a good shot practically impossible unless they chance to be so fortunate as to recover the proper position at the proper moment — a pleasant dispensation which comes to few people.

It is an important matter always to let the club-head lead. I have pointed out the danger of allowing the body to lead by the act of lurching away from the ball at the beginning of the up-swing; similarly would I lay stress on the mistake of snatching the club-head away by a hasty movement with rigid wrists. As the club starts to go back, allow the left wrist to turn slightly inwards toward the body. That small operation will help very considerably to secure the correct position of the wrist and club-head at the top of the swing. Then, if you determine to wind up the body at the hips and keep your head steady, so that the screwing

## THE ART OF DRIVING

operation ceases, so to speak, at the neck, you ought to be able to learn the knack of driving. As the club goes up the right leg will stiffen, the left leg will bend inwards at the knee, and the left heel will rise from the ground. All these happenings are the natural outcome of the winding up of the body; they do not occur — at any rate, in the same degree — when the player sways. Resolve that the left heel shall not turn outwards more than an inch or so (less if possible) and, at the top of the swing, you will be correctly poised. The pivoting will have been done on the inside of the left foot (on that portion of the member in question which extends from the big toe to the big joint) and the right foot will be resting firmly on the ground.

When you are practising it is instructive to inspect your left wrist at the top of the swing in order to ascertain whether



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

it is in the proper position. That it should be so is important, and inasmuch as you are in no great hurry during these purely personal proceedings, it is as well to turn your head and examine the left wrist. If it is bent outwards, the club-head is necessarily in the wrong position. This highly important left wrist should be bent inwards so that it constitutes the base of a curve of which the hand and the arm are the continuations. That being so, the club-head will be pointing to the ground, as it should be.

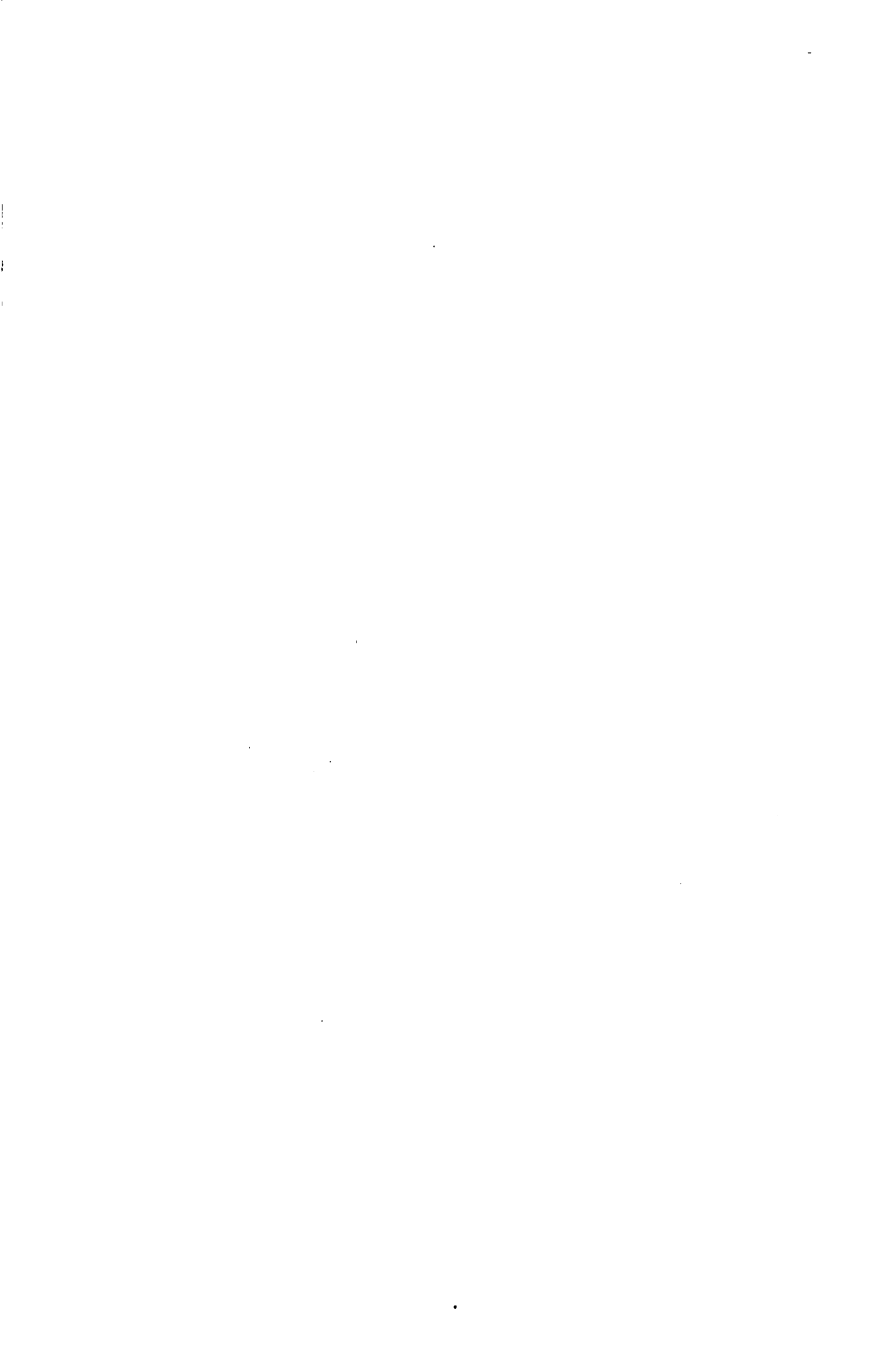
In coming down, it is highly important to let the club-head lead. Do not throw your arms forward as though you were trying to mow grass. Just give the club a start, and in the first stage of the downward swing — a stage which lasts for only a brief instant, but which is of vast importance to the ultimate issue — let the left hip go forward a trifle. Then



**STANCE FOR THE DRIVE.**



**BEGINNING OF THE UP SWING.**



## THE ART OF DRIVING

bring the club round with rhythmic vim, its pace increasing until it is traveling at its fastest when it reaches the ball, and go right through with the shot so that the hands finish high and the chest faces the line of play at the end of the stroke. Beware, above all things, of hurling the arms forward at the beginning of the downward swing. It is one of the most frequent of errors, and it nearly always produces a shot which flies in any but the straight path.

There is much to be said for the aphorism "slow back"; but it is not desirable to perform the upward movement at funereal pace. It is necessary to remember that you are going to play a free and full shot; you are not attempting merely to flick a fly five yards. Consequently, excessive slowness during the backward swing is apt to do more harm than good. The slight inward turn of the left wrist;

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

the winding-up of the body from the hips to the neck; and the resolve to let the club-head lead instead of allowing the arms to throw it forward at the beginning of the downward swing — these are golden principles. And keep your own head down until you have struck the ball; keep smelling at the ball, as it were, until you have despatched it on its journey.

The grip is a matter of fancy. I should be something less (or, perhaps more) than human if I advocated any but the overlapping grip. It may not suit all golfers, but I have no hesitation in saying that is the ideal manner of holding the club. It is agreed by all students of the game that the two hands should work as a whole. That was one of the first floods of light that came to us in the old days in Jersey. When I became a professional, about the earliest thing that I did was to

## THE ART OF DRIVING

consider the question of the grip. For a full year I tried various ways of holding the club, until at length I decided in favor of the method which I now employ. It seems to me to weld the two hands into one; the beauty of it is that neither hand works against the other. That, I am sure, is just what is wanted. For the man who has practised the old-fashioned palm grip for a long while the system which I advocate may be difficult at the outset, but familiarity breeds friendliness with it. It is a matter of placing the little finger of the right hand over the forefinger of the left, with the thumbs and forefingers forming V's down the handle of the club. It produces a confederacy of the kind which is not easily secured in any other way.

As regards general details, I would suggest a low tee for the drive, because, if you have a high one, you are likely to

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

see difficulties (which do not actually exist) in the brassie shot, and, indeed, every other shot through the green. You start with the ball poised high above the ground, and you are not altogether prepared for the shock of having to play it when it is sitting down on the turf. Another useful hint is to be sure of securing a comfortable stance on the teeing ground. It is the only place at which you have the right to choose a stance, and you may as well make the most of it. So hunt for a favorable spot on which to tee the ball. And, when there is an out-of-bounds area to be taken into consideration, tee the ball as far from it as the limits of the teeing ground will allow. These are matters which at times count heavily.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### THE DRIVE

*Stance.* — Toes pointing outwards; right foot preferably a few inches in front of the left — not, in any case, behind the left. Ball a little nearer to left heel than right.

*Up-Swing.* — Begin by turning the left wrist slightly inwards towards the body. As the club goes up, let the body screw at the hips and keep the head still. The body should be wound up as though it turned on wheels at the waist and the neck. The right leg stiffens as club ascends and the pivoting is done on the inside of the left foot from the big toe to the big joint.



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

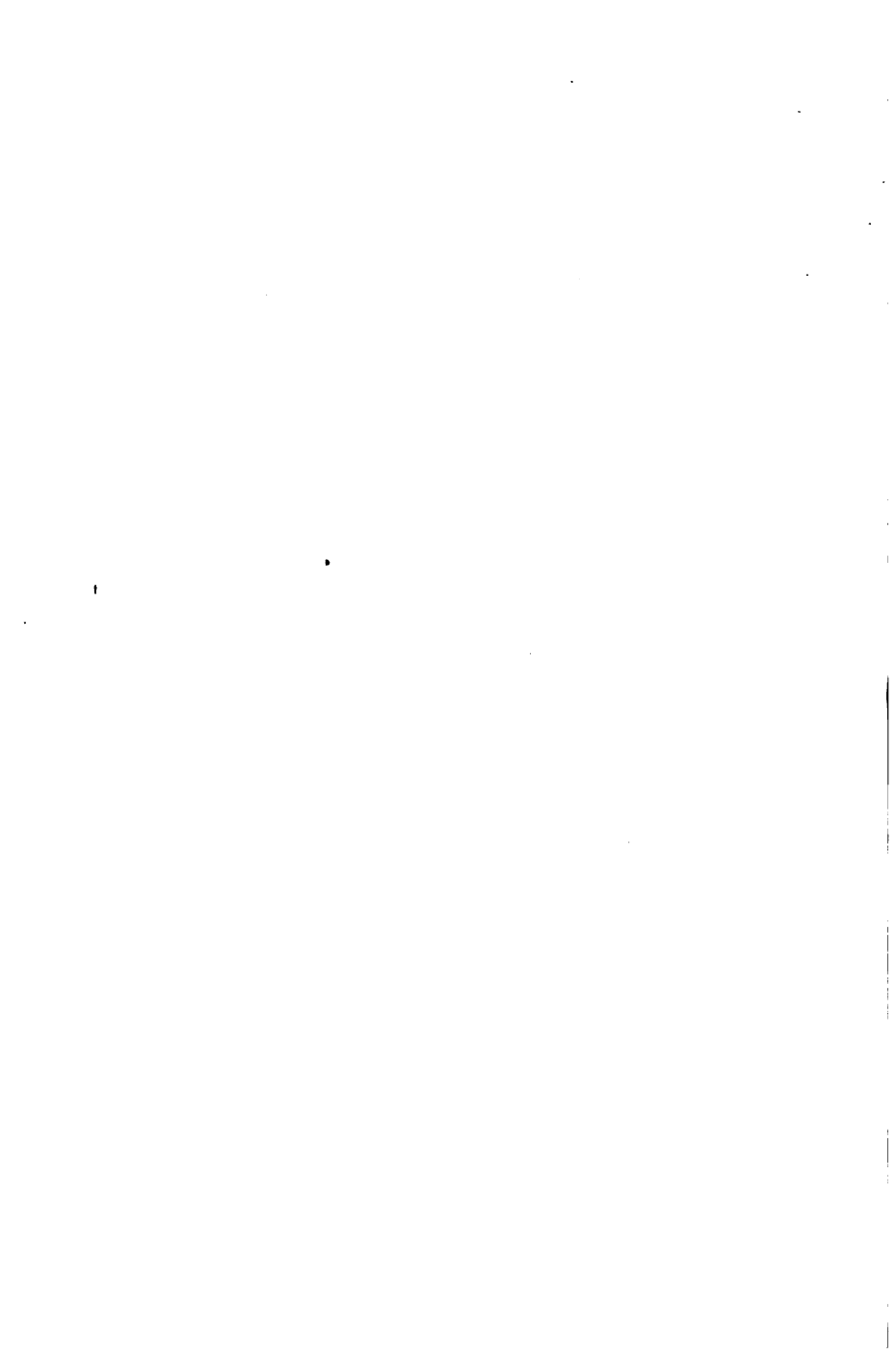
*Down-Swing.* — Beware of throwing the arms forward at the beginning of the down-swing. At the outset, just give the club a start so as to recover it from the back of the head and, at the same time, let the left hip go a trifle forward. Then bring the club round, and go right through with the shot so as to finish with the chest facing the line of play. Keep the head as steady as possible all the while.



**FINISH OF THE SWING.**

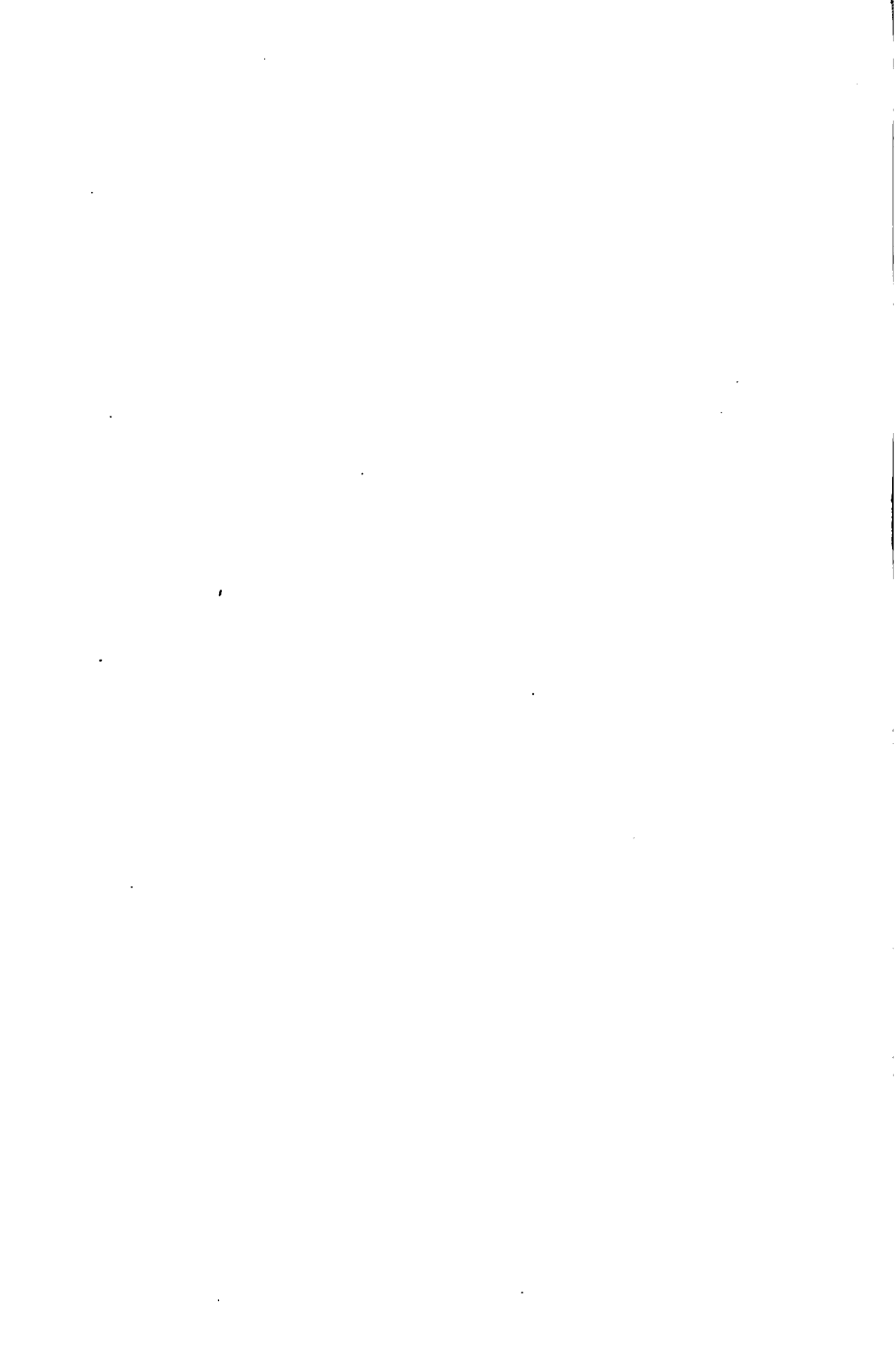


**TOP OF THE SWING FOR THE DRIVE.**



**ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS**

**BY**  
**ALEXANDER HERD**



## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

**F**OR the playing of fairly long shots up to the hole (shots, that is, of rather less than the length which one can obtain with a brassie) no club is so dependable and so easy to use as a good spoon. On that point I feel certain, and to me it is a matter of great surprise that the spoon is not found in the bag of every golfer.

It takes the place of the cleek or driving iron. Now, either of these latter instruments is, by common consent, difficult to manage to perfection. Especially is this the case where the player of moderate ability is concerned. The club has a face which is not far from

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

being straight, which means that, to secure a satisfactory result, the ball must be struck with absolute precision. Another danger of the cleek or the driving iron (at least, to the average golfer) arises from the narrowness of its sole. That narrowness, combined with the sharpness of the edge, means that when the player takes the turf the very slightest fraction of an inch too deeply in the act of striking, the club digs into the ground for an instant and receives a jar which causes it to turn in the hands. And, as everybody knows (or ought to know), the circumstance of the club turning in the hands as it hits the ball generally produces an atrociously bad stroke.

The advantage of the spoon is that it has a broad sole which, even when the shot is not accomplished in quite ideal manner, grazes the turf instead of cut-

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

ting into it and enables the shot to be completed without the club having turned in the hands. Moreover, its face is laid back and shaped in such a manner that it lifts the ball into the air when a similarly executed shot with a cleek would result in nothing better than a fozzle. I do not think that a golfer ought to expect good effects from bad attempts, and I can assure him that if he plays a spoon shot badly he will suffer for it; but what I do believe is that the cleek is a treacherous club and an unprofitable one for the moderate golfer to use, because it accentuates so very severely the smallest error in the method of its manipulation. And no matter how diligently you study the matter, it is sometimes very difficult to discover the reason. The spoon is an instrument that never turns against you. That is why it is ideal for the in-



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

different player. For banging the ball up to the hole from a distance of, say, 160 or 180 yards (or even greater if you are a strong hitter), it is all that a club could be. The ball is picked up cleanly and it does not run far when it alights, whereas, with the cleek, there is first the risk of spoiling the shot by hitting the ground and then the danger of the ball running over the green as a consequence of its lower flight.

It is, however, a matter of the greatest importance to obtain a good spoon. The "lie" should be governed by the stance of the player; that is to say, by the distance which he stands from the ball when addressing it. The weight of the club-head should be from  $6\frac{3}{4}$  ounces to  $7\frac{1}{4}$  ounces (a golfer with a half swing might have a slightly heavier club): the shaft should measure from 40 to 41 inches from the heel; and care-

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

ful attention should be paid to the shape of the face. I have made a special study of the spoon, and there is no need for me here to mention all that I have discovered, but I am sure that it is a matter of great moment to have the face fashioned with the utmost regard for detail. There should be a distinct bulge at the bottom of the face, a bulge that projects in just the right degree for getting under the ball, and making it rise quickly. It is a splendid club for use on heavy ground, owing to the cleanness with which it picks up the ball, and the only time when I do not favor its employment is in a gale. It produces high shots which are apt to be caught and blown anywhere by the wind, and, in such circumstances, its place should be taken by the cleek or the straight-faced iron. On all other occasions, however, it is

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

a valuable friend, especially to the player of moderate ability.

What a first-class golfer can do with it has been shown on many occasions. I should never tire of watching Mr. H. H. Hilton at his best playing his spoon. Harry Vardon used to have such a club, which, in his hands, would do almost anything except walk and talk; at least, it would do anything that he wanted it to do. George Duncan and Jack White are others who occur to me on the spur of the moment as being brilliant exponents of spoon shots. Personally, I always have had a great affection for the club. I used to take it out, together with half-a-dozen balls, and practise stroke after stroke with it. And here let me say that, when you are practising, it trebles the value of the work if you aim at a certain spot. It is not a lot of use sim-

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

ply to hit ball after ball without having a target. Many golfers do this, and I cannot help thinking that they are employing their time to poor advantage.

I have never regretted my early devotion to the spoon. It helped me very considerably when, in 1902, I won the Open Championship at Hoylake, and I used it constantly in 1895 and 1896, when I was lucky enough to capture the majority of the tournaments in which I competed. I had begun to compliment it on having assisted me to secure my first Open Championship, when, at St. Andrews in 1895, I started the last round with a lead of three strokes from my nearest opponent, but unfortunately on that occasion I had reckoned without the weather. I began the second round very satisfactorily with three 4's and a 5. Then

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

down came a shower of hailstones that were nearly as big as pigeons' eggs. The visitation soon passed off, but while it lasted it rendered putting a farce (the ball simply cannoned from hailstone to hailstone), and I think I am justified in saying that it was during that period that I lost the Championship. Still, the fault was not that of the spoon, which was again about the most effective club, when in the Championship at Muirfield in 1896 I set up a record score of 72 — a record which stood for many years. That was the best round of my life with a gutty ball, and my partner, Mr. J. E. Laidley, was good enough to remark at the finish that it was the hottest he had ever seen. I doubt whether I should have done these things without my spoon.

Most first-class golfers play for a slight "heel" or slice with the spoon,



**TOP OF SWING WITH SPOON.**



**FINISH OF SWING WITH SPOON.**



## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

which is a club admirably adapted to that purpose. It helps to make the ball drop dead, but I would not recommend the average player to attempt these fancy shots, which require nearly a lifetime to master. A straight-away shot will serve the average amateur very well, and he will find nothing easier with which to accomplish it than the spoon, which, of all clubs, is the one least likely to lead to unmitigated fozzles. I have seen many men who would have been good golfers if they had not concerned themselves so deeply about accomplishing intentional slices and pulls.

Very well, then, let us consider the straight shot with the spoon. I think that an open stance is best for the stroke, because it is the natural cutting stance and the club of its own accord imparts a little cut to the shot without the



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

player trying for it. That feature is worthy of encouragement since it helps to make the ball stop close to the place at which it pitches, which is a consideration when you are aiming to make it stop by the hole-side. However, if the player prefers the square stance, there is no reason why he should deny himself the privilege of adopting it. The main point is to stand easily and comfortably and to have the ball about six inches inside the left heel.

During the upward movement the left arm and the club-head should swing well out behind the ball, but the arm should not stray far from the body. Indeed, it should be kept fairly close in all the way up. As the club ascends, let the left shoulder move down slightly towards the ball, the hips screwing round the while and the left knee knuckling down a little towards the right big toe,

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

so as to accommodate the twisting of the body. It is one of the worst of golfing faults to keep the left knee rigid during the upward swing; it is bound to result in the body being pushed away from the ball. What usually follows is either a top or a slice.

When the hands are level with the right ear you are at the top of the swing for the spoon. It is worse than useless to strain to go back any further. At the beginning of the downward swing the action may consist simply of recovering the club from behind the head; anything to avoid snatching it excitedly from that position. Then, having started it on its downward journey, let it gather pace. In fact, I always say: "Throw the club-head at the ball." Bring it behind the ball with a fairly flat swing, and give it a little flick with the wrists so as to introduce plenty of

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

vim. Do not in any circumstances check the club. Let it have free play for the follow-through; let the arms go through without a suspicion of hesitation. Fling them through in a line with the flag. I believe that these words are worth remembering. I am certain that many players would make greater progress if only they would let the arm and the club do the work.

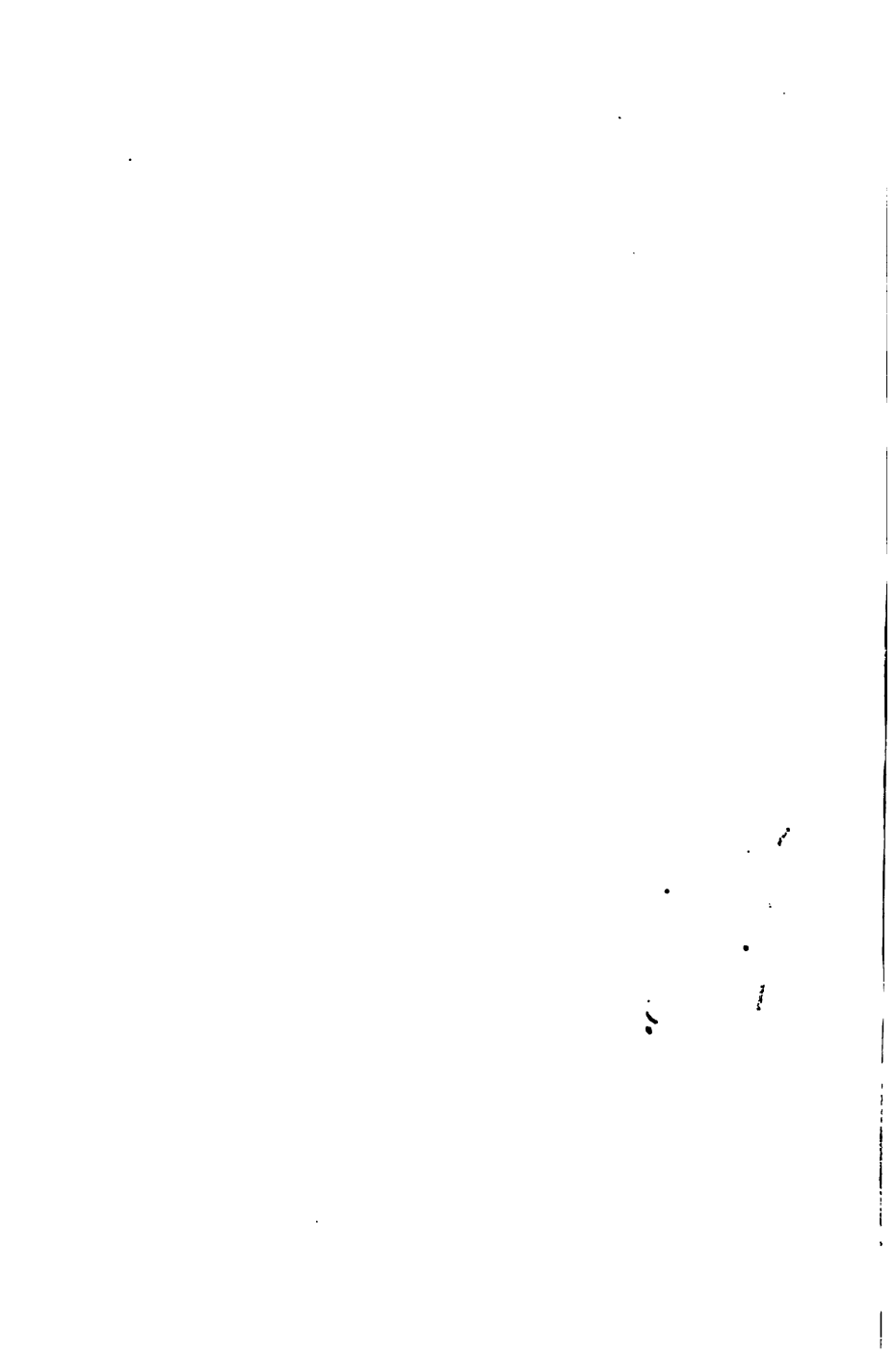
Personally, I always play for "cut" with the spoon. For this shot one needs to stand well behind the ball, and take the club up a little straighter than for the ordinary shot. One gets the slice mainly, however, by pulling in the left arm a little at the instant of impact. In that way the face of the club is drawn across the ball, but there must be no checking of the swing. The finish will be rather different from that associated with the straight shot (the head



**STANCE FOR CUT SHOT WITH SPOON.**



**FINISH OF CUT SHOT WITH SPOON.**



## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

of the club will stop higher in the air), but the slightest attempt to check the instrument at the time of hitting it is almost sure to be disastrous. In all probability it will result in a slice of twice the magnitude of that desired. I generally aim at a spot about twenty yards to the left of the hole, and so play for a slice of that extent. It comes off if one practises the shot from early youth, but I would not recommend other than the fairly proficient golfer to bother about it.

I cannot help thinking that it is a pity that there is not more wooden club play. Very many golfers carry what almost amounts to a portable foundry. With the exception of a driver, and possibly a brassie, they have nothing but iron in the bag. For this condition of affairs the introduction of the rubber-cored ball is largely

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

responsible. On hard ground the tee-shot travels so far that often one goes round the links without having to use the brassie for the second shot on a solitary occasion. The spoon, however, is well worth carrying; in some circumstances, as, for instance, when the ground is heavy and there is little wind, it is just about the most serviceable of all clubs. In the ordinary way you cannot make so many bad strokes with it as with a cleek or a driving iron.

In regard to full iron shots up to the hole, I think that a three-quarter swing (or, at any rate, something less than a full swing) is sufficient for the average golfer to take. The club needs to be kept absolutely under control, and a three-quarter swing renders the operation more compact and permits greater command over the club than when one swings to the full, as with a driver. At

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

the beginning the left arm should be carried well out past the body. The right elbow should be kept close to the body all the way up. If you order your two arms simultaneously in this way you are likely to secure the correct swing for an iron. The wrists should be fairly taut. You need to grip firmly so as to avoid the catastrophe of the club turning in the hands. My own manner of hitting is to give the ball the back of the left hand and a flick of the right wrist. When the club is about eighteen inches from the ball I hit with the back of the left hand and, at the same time, put in that right-wrist flick which counts for so much. The right hand is an important one for iron shots; you want to hit with it. The right shoulder and right hip should come well through, the head of the iron following straight out as far as possible in the



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

line of play. A cause of many bad shots is the premature movement of the head. Keep that necessary nuisance down as long as you can as though you had it in a vice. If you have the habit of moving your head throughout the swing, it is a good thing to try, from the moment that you start to take the club back, to keep pushing your nose towards the ball. Imagine that you are endeavoring to get your nose down to the ball. And keep it down for half a second after you have hit. Many players are looking up while they are in the act of striking the ball.

I would advise the average golfer when purchasing a cleek or a driving iron to see that it has sufficient loft on it. It is one of the most difficult things in the game to play a long shot perfectly with a straight-faced club. Have an instrument that will lift the ball.



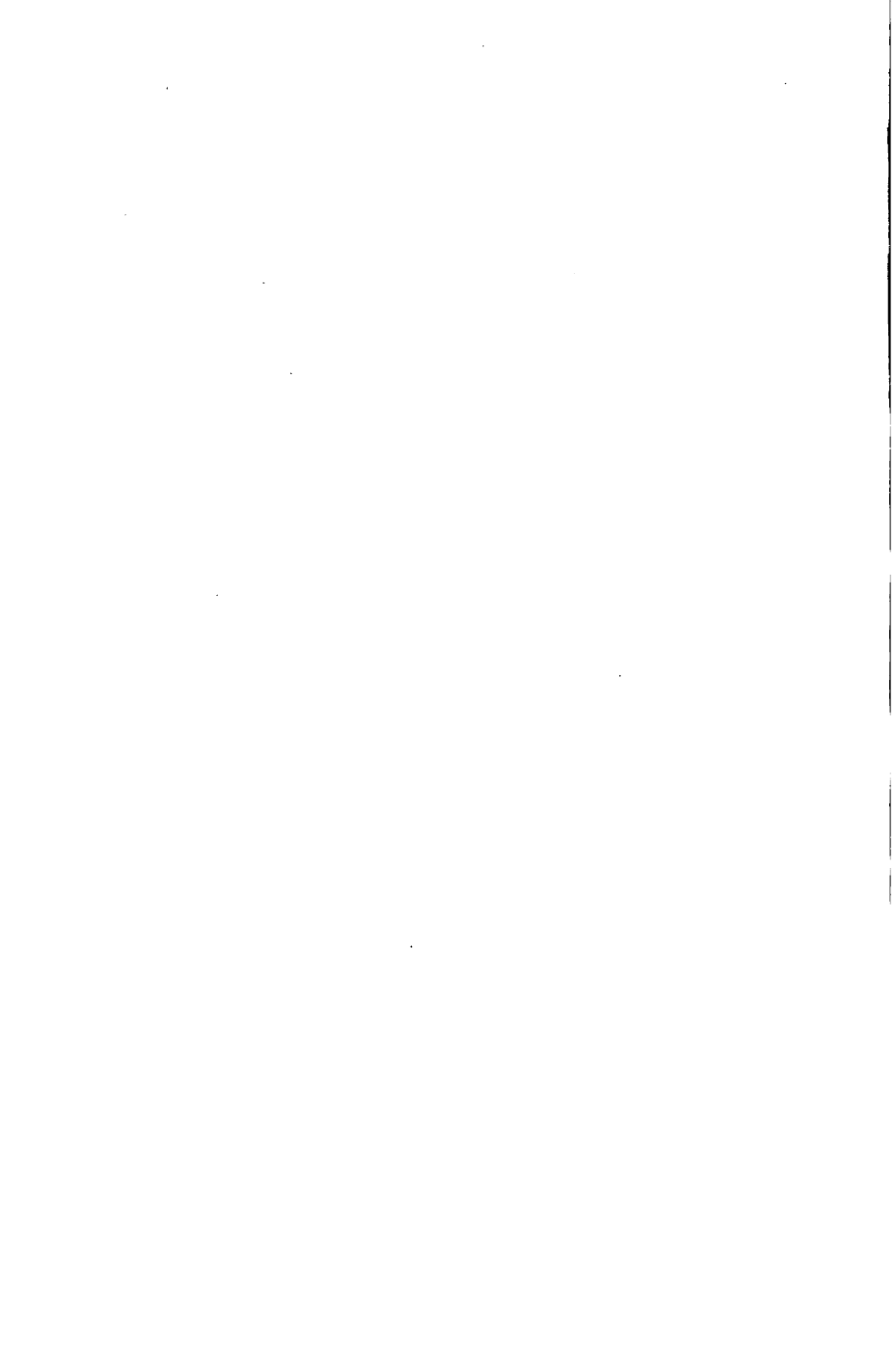
FINISH OF IRON SHOT.



TOP OF SWING WITH THE IRON.



STANCE FOR THE IRON.



## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

Frequently golfers come to me and ask why it is that they cannot use their cleeks or driving irons. The reason is usually the straightness of the face.

During the last year or so there has been much talk concerning the "push" shot with iron clubs. I am sorry to add confusion to the distraction which seems to have arisen from this subject, but I should like to say that what is called the "push" shot to-day is a stroke with a different purpose from that of the "push" shot which we used to practise at St. Andrews. That was essentially a St. Andrews shot; it suited the course down to the ground. It was made with a low, flat back swing. The right wrist was kept rigid and the left arm had to bend very little in the back swing. The game was to push the arms back and then push them straight through at the ball, the right arm being

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

stiff during the process of hitting and so keeping the club low. The ball rose only two or three yards into the air, and ran twenty or thirty yards. Mr. S. Mure Fergusson and Andrew Kirkaldy were masters of this original "push" shot. It was a most valuable stroke in my younger days at St. Andrews.

It may seem a topsy-turvy arrangement to discuss last of all the matter of the grip, which comes first in the preparation for a shot, but I think that nearly every golfer has made up his mind which manner of holding the club — the overlapping or the palm grip — he likes best, and I do not see any reason why, in this respect, he should abandon his favorite principle. Once upon a time I tried the overlapping method. It rubbed nearly all the skin off my left thumb, and so I gave it up in despair and some pain. Personally, I find

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS

the old-fashioned palm grip eminently satisfactory. I grip tightest with the second, third, and little fingers; you can obtain such a firm hold with those members that there is not a lot of danger of the club slipping. It seems to me to be the easiest way of holding the club, and that is something.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### THE SPOON SHOT

*Stance.* — Open for choice, although the player who regularly adopts a square stance need not abandon it for this shot. Ball about six inches inside the left heel.

*Up-Swing.* — Let the left arm and club-head swing well out behind the ball. The wrists must begin to turn directly the up-swing starts. At the top of the swing — *i. e.*, when the hands are in a line with the right ear — the player should be looking over his left shoulder. This is important.

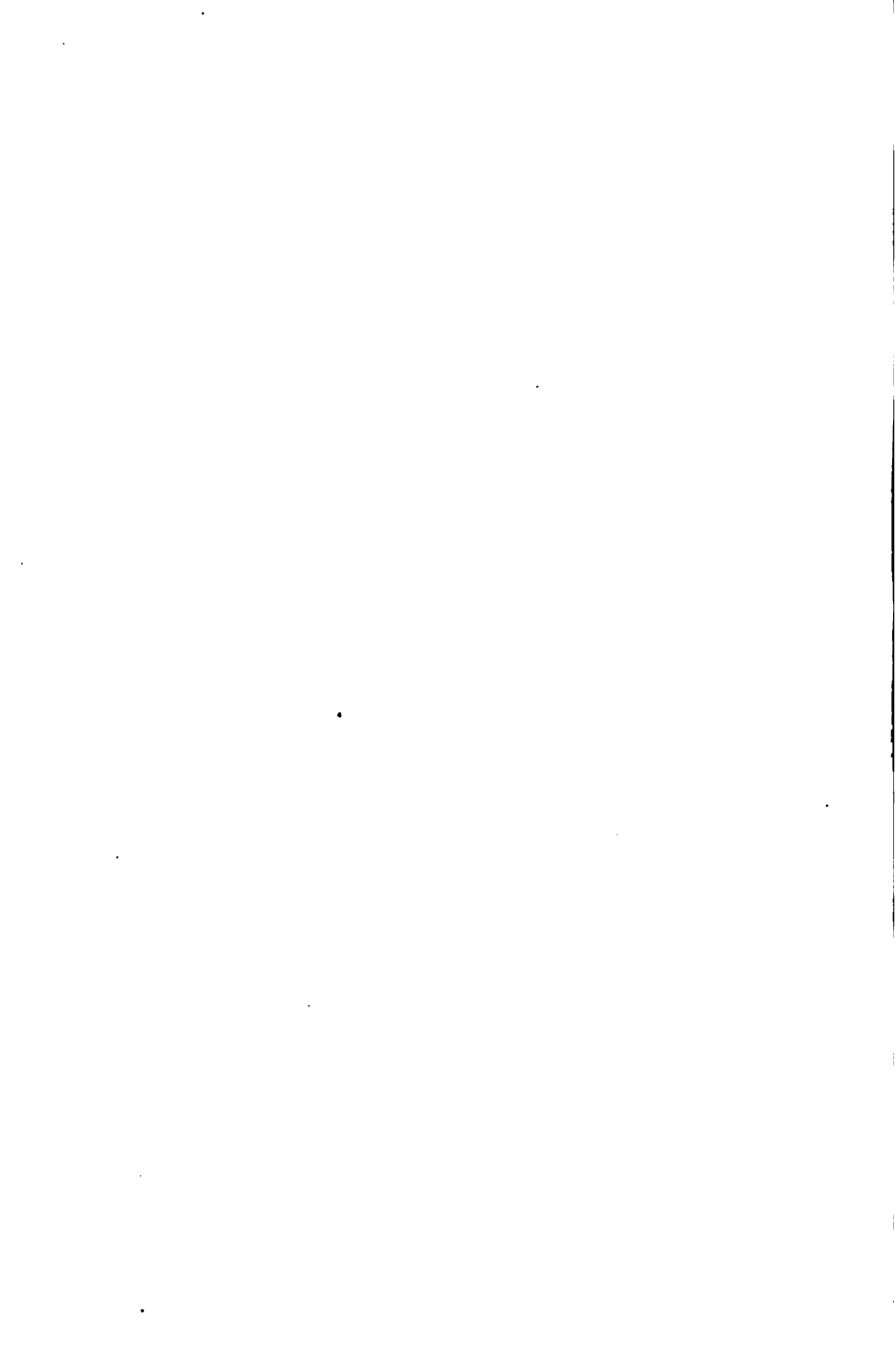
*Down-Swing.* — Bring the club down with a fairly flat swing and follow-through; let the right shoulder and right hip go well through for the finish.

## ON SPOON AND IRON SHOTS'

### THE FULL IRON SHOT

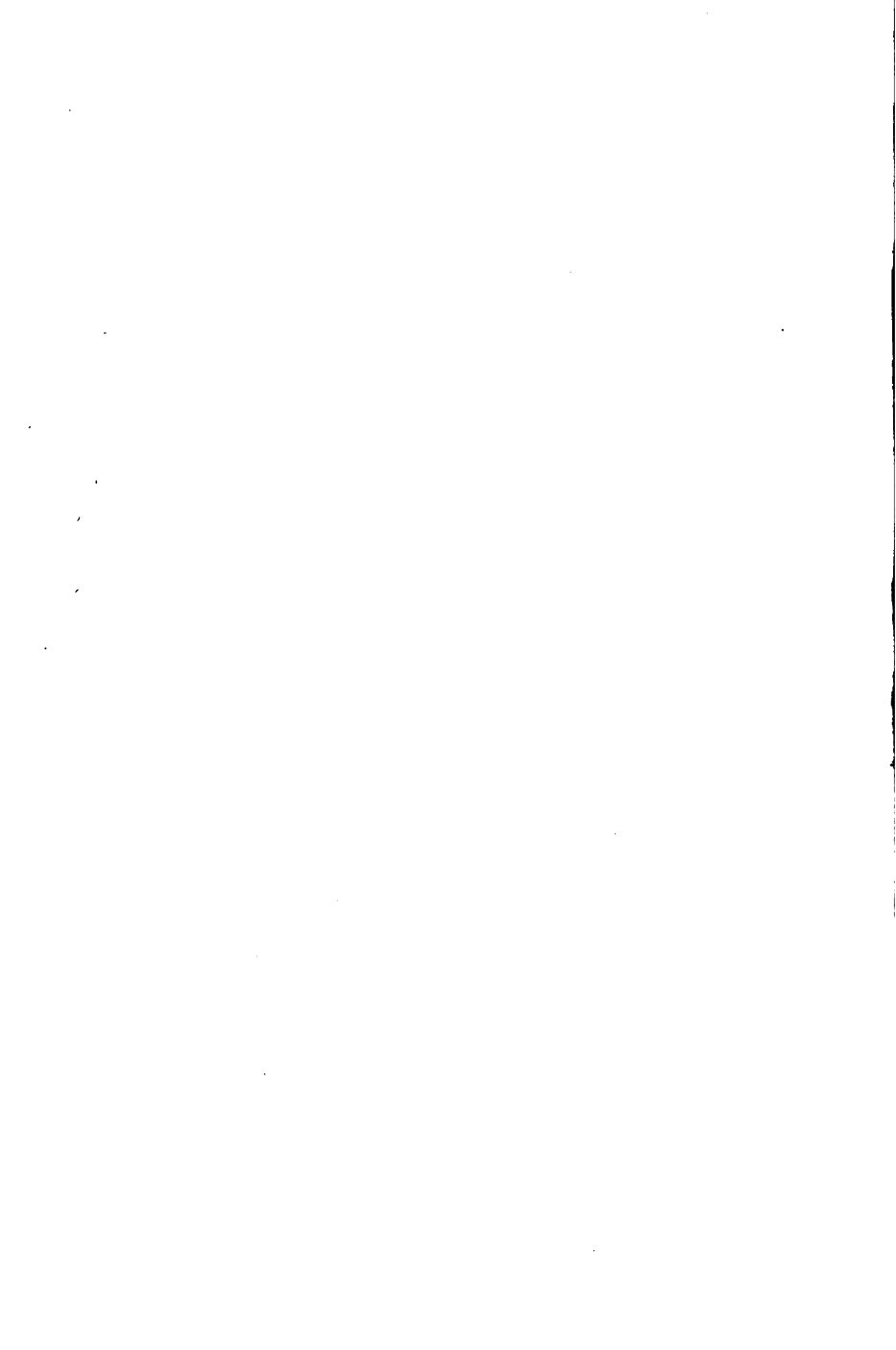
A three-quarter swing is sufficient; tight grip; keep the right elbow close to the body all the way up; and, at the impact, give the ball the back of the left hand and hit with the right wrist.





**THE "PUSH" SHOT**

**BY**  
**GEORGE DUNCAN**



## THE "PUSH" SHOT

**I**F you were to ask a dozen of the leading professional golfers to name the stroke which they found the greatest joy in playing in the course of the round, I believe that three out of every four would declare in favor of the half or three-quarter shot with an iron club by which the ball is made to fly in a low trajectory and stop within a few yards of its pitch.

It is usually called the "push" shot. I do not know who gave it that title. In a way, it is misleading. It is even impertinent to the golfing law of the land, which says that the ball must not be pushed. However, the Rules Committee have not found us guilty on our own ad-

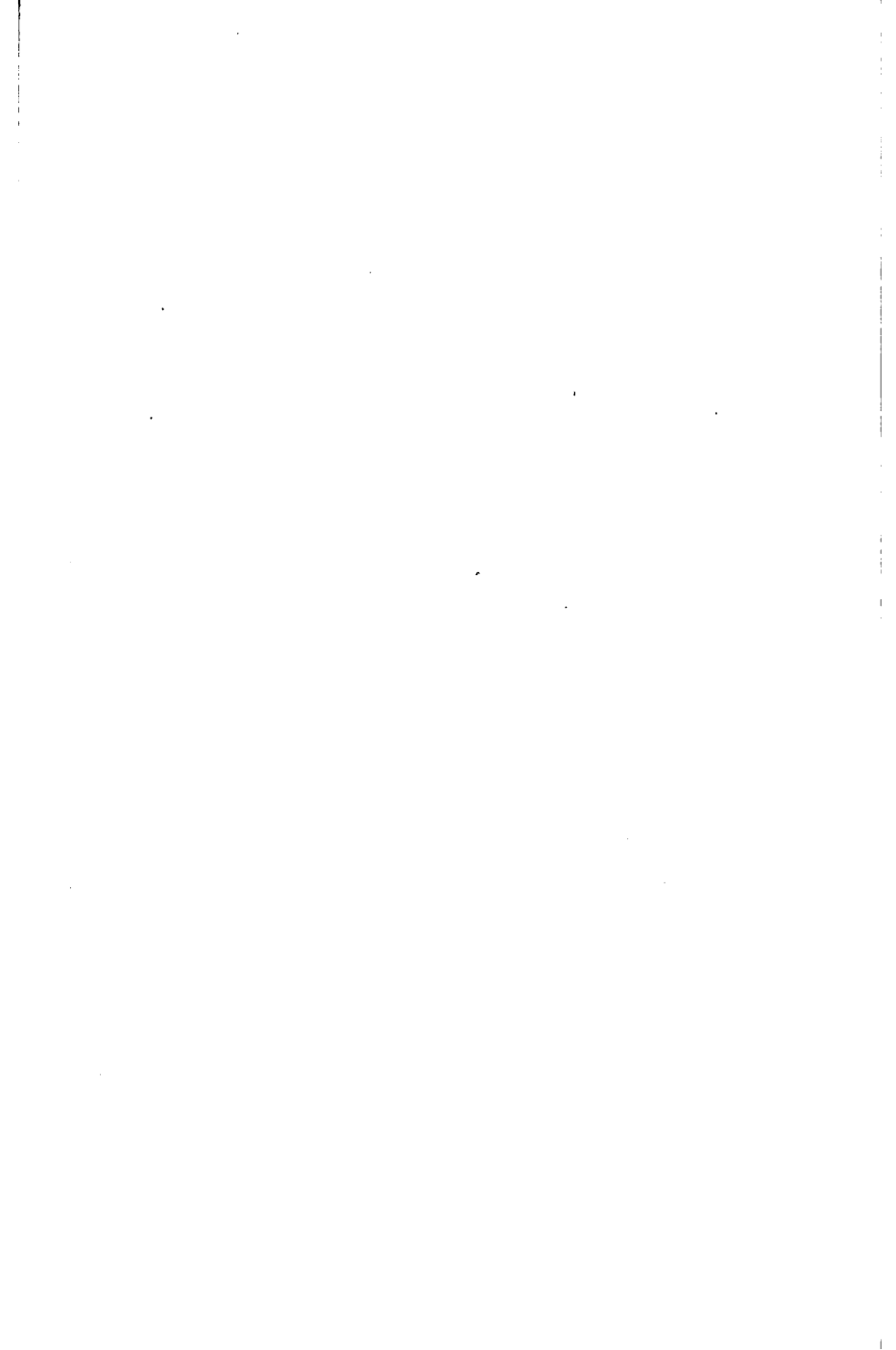
## SUCCESS AT GOLF

mission of executing an illegal stroke, and the reason is to be found in the fact that, where this shot is concerned, the element of "push" is no stronger than in the case of other approved modes of hitting the ball. It is simply a shot struck forcibly with an iron club, but in a special manner which communicates back-spin to the ball. By no means is it a latter-day development. At least, it has been practised as long as I can remember, and as it has been known all the while as a "push" shot, custom, I suppose, has made the name correct. It does not matter much what we call a stroke so long as it is real golf.

It is not solely because of the pleasure which they derive from accomplishing it that the professionals have such an affection for the "push" shot. Certainly it gives immense satisfaction, but its chief recommendation lies in the advan-



**GEORGE DUNCAN.**



## THE "PUSH" SHOT

tage which it gives to the golfer who is master of it. With the gutta-percha ball it was useful, but it was not indispensable to a first-class player. Even with top-spin, the "gutty" never ran far. The difficulty with the rubber-cored ball is not so much to make it go as to make it stop, and here it is that this particular shot is invaluable. The very resiliency which makes the rubber-cored ball scamper so far when top-spin has been applied to it also operates in the case of back-spin. The object is very susceptible to any kind of spin, and, for that reason, approaching of the present-day is as high an art as one can find in sport. It demands a lot of skill. Almost anybody can make the ball revolve in the direction in which it is traveling, but for approaches with the mashie or iron, that kind of spin is seldom other than dangerous. There is not much telling where



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

the ball will come to rest. The quality which the average golfer needs to cultivate is the ability to impart back-spin. If he can play a half-shot with the feeling that, when the ball reaches the green, it will not scoot into the bunker or the rough beyond, he is on the road to a high position in his club. All the best golfers, amateurs and professionals, have this shot in their bag, and it is so faithful in its effect, so certain to produce the desired result when properly executed, that they seldom play a shot with cleek or iron in any other way, no matter what the circumstances. Even with the mashie they adopt the same principle, although they also apply some cut to the ball by urging the club slightly away from the body at the beginning of the upward swing, and so securing a downward swing which draws the face of the club across the back of the ball at the

## THE "PUSH" SHOT

instant of impact. Still, the fact remains that they also introduce a degree of the "push" shot. The mashie play of the man who is master of that club usually results in the production of a whirling motion of the ball, which is something between side-spin from left to right and back-spin.

However, this shot can be left for the delectation of the skilful golfer, for whom few worlds remain to be conquered. The ordinary player, who has obtained a thorough knowledge of the rudiments of the game and qualified for a handicap which enables him to go on to the links in any company with the knowledge that he ought not to disgrace himself, may be advised to set about the task of making himself proficient at the "push." It is the first step to greatness after the trials and tribulations of learning the purely elementary points, and turning his learning to good account by practising what

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

has been preached to him. It takes varying periods of time to impregnate the system with the right ideas in the matter of the execution of commonplace shots, and each individual knows by his success, or lack of it, whether he would be justified in trying advanced strokes. If, however, he can perform the simple shots with a fair measure of satisfaction to himself, then by all means let him aspire to a higher ideal in the shape of the push, which, once understood and accomplished skilfully, will mark the real beginning of his progress as a golfer.

The secret of success in playing the shot may be summed up in one word — “Forward.” Everything — the hands, the stance, the weight during the execution of the stroke, and the follow-through after the impact — should be forward in the direction in which it is proposed to send the ball. We are not going to try

## THE "PUSH" SHOT

and get under the ball and lift it high into the air. Naturally, if we wanted to do that, we should get behind it, and put our weight on the right leg. We desire to keep the ball low and at the same time impart back-spin. The two requirements will be obtained by a religious observance of that watchword — "Forward." However, we cannot leave the golfer muttering to himself this maxim, and wondering all the while what it means. It conveys an idea of the principle, and may be borne in mind whenever the experimentalist attacks the shot, but rather fuller details are necessary for his assistance in the days of trial.

Personally I would recommend a beginning at a distance of 80 or 100 yards from the green or other goal at which the player proposes to aim. It is best to study the shot in a comparatively small way; the ability to accomplish it

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

at a distance of 160 yards will come in due course if the student possesses a certain degree of aptitude for it, and — what is even more important — the perseverance to go on practising it in spite of early failures and possibly a few smashed shafts. It is rather disappointing to find one's ambition rewarded on the first day with a broken club, but there are many things hard to bear in the golfing life. For a shot of 80 or 100 yards an iron or a jigger is a good implement to employ. If you like a jigger, it is, perhaps, the better to use; of the two clubs, it is the more suited to the purpose because of its shallow face.

As regards the stance, the player should be fairly near to the ball. He is not going to "sweep" the object off the turf by means of a nice, easy swing; he is not going to coax the ball in any way. He is going to hit it exceedingly hard.



THE STANCE.



CORRECT POSITION OF TOP OF SWING.



## THE "PUSH" SHOT

Consequently he needs to be in close touch with it. If he has it only a trifle too much out of his reach, the effect is almost sure to be spoiled. In the address the hands should be a little in front of the ball — not even in a line with it, but in front of it. This is all-important. It is the primary constituent of that condition of "forwardness" (in physical, not mental, disposition), which I have already described as the secret of the shot. The right foot should be square to the line of play, the toes of the left foot should be pointing well out, with the ball about two inches inside the left heel. That is to say, if you had a line drawn from the left heel at right angles to the direction which you propose to take, the ball should be about two inches inside that line. The feet must not be spread wide apart; in the ordinary way, a distance of something like fifteen inches



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

between the heels is sufficient. Hardly can the player devote too much attention to the task of obtaining the correct stance. Without it the shot is well-nigh impossible. As you stand addressing the ball there should be rather more weight on the left leg than on the right. If you have your feet wide apart, it is difficult comfortably to put even slightly the greater part of the weight on to the left. The reason for pointing the toes of the left leg outwards and having the right square to the line of play is that the former is thus put into a position which enables the body to go forward with the blow, while the disposition of the right leg helps to keep the weight on the left.

At the range at which we are beginning to practise, a half-swing is sufficient, but in no circumstances should a swing of more than three-quarters be permitted in connection with this stroke. The

## THE "PUSH" SHOT

reason is that we want to come down on to the back of the ball (not underneath it), and that, therefore, the swing must be an upright one. The left arm should be bent as little as possible in the process of taking the club up; it should be as nearly straight all the way as the player can keep it. By bending the left elbow at the three-quarter point, and so making the swing a full one, with the implement dropping into position behind the head, the whole machinery for the shot is put out of gear. Let the left arm be as straight as you like (you cannot keep it absolutely rigid, but the nearer it approximates to that condition the better), and as the club goes up let the weight steadily move more and more pronouncedly on to the left foot. Naturally there must be some pivoting. It is disastrous to try to screw on the entire ball of the foot; that only upsets the position

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

of the body. The pivoting should be accomplished on the left big toe. That is to say, if you had a corn on the ball of that toe and another on the ball of the foot opposite the toe, the turning should be done — it would be horribly painful — on the area limited by the corns, and at the top of the swing practically all the weight should be concentrated on that area. At the point mentioned you cannot have too much weight on the left big toe. The right leg merely comes in useful to prevent you from falling over, since it is difficult, after all, to execute a stroke on one leg only. At first I thought of saying that the right leg might be amputated for all the value it possesses. That would be going too far, but I hope it affords an idea as to the place at which the weight should be at the top of the swing.

There is one danger which must be



**WRONG FINISH.**



**CORRECT FINISH OF A HALF PUSH SHOT.**



## THE "PUSH" SHOT

rigorously avoided in connection with the downward swing. It is the temptation to bear to the right, and so throw the weight on to the right leg. Remember the watchword — "Forward" — and keep forward all the while. If you can accomplish that simple act of restraint, you are well on the way to mastering the shot. As the club descends the arms should become rigid, so as to give the ball a powerful blow. And the follow-through should be checked directly the club-head has passed the spot where the ball lay. This may sound revolutionary, but I firmly believe that, for the shot under discussion, the sooner you stop the follow-through after striking the ball the better will be the result. I need scarcely say that you must not stop it in the slightest degree before the impact; you need to hit hard and then finish. Do not in any circumstances

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

chop at the ball. This is how shafts are broken. It must be a clean and strong stroke, with an abbreviated follow-through.

It is necessary to aim at the back of the ball; not at the turf behind it. You want to hit down on the ball (if you have kept your weight forward, this must happen) as though you were trying to bang the back out of it. This imparts back-spin, which is considerably helped by the bite of the ball on the turf. The club, instead of getting under the ball, is half over it at the period of impact. The hands are in front of it; the weight is in front of it. You thump it firmly, and off it flies, but it cannot fly high because it has been hit down, so to speak, from the outset. Place a billiard ball on a table, and come down strongly on the back of the ball with the edge of your outstretched hand. Back-spin will be in-

## THE "PUSH" SHOT

troduced. This is the idea of the "push" shot in golf. When the ball touches the ground it is revolving in the direction opposite to that in which it is running. This conflict of motions — the one operates directly against the other — causes it quickly to lose its strength, and it comes to rest. The beauty of the shot is that it travels far in the air and stops soon when it reaches the earth.

The method which I have described is that of James Braid, who is probably the finest exponent of the "push" shot in the world. I like his way of doing it, but the up-swing with the weight forward all the while involves a good deal of strain on the body, and there is another way which is equally efficacious in the case of the player who has the knack of recovering the proper position at top of the swing after having lost it to the extent of an inch or two at the beginning



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

of the swing. It is by starting with the weight equally distributed, and allowing the right to take slightly the bigger share during the first half of the up-swing. In a sense, the body may follow the club to a very slight degree at the inauguration of the operation, but when the club is half the way up the weight must be transferred to the left big toe, so that it is there at the top of the swing, just as it was under the system described earlier in this article. And there it must remain; in no circumstances may it be re-shifted to the right leg in even the very remotest measure during the downward swing. There is nothing to be said against this manner of playing the stroke except that, for its perfect accomplishment, one needs a sort of inborn gift in the matter of putting the weight on to the left leg at the right instant and repressing the inclination to take it off again. Always

## **THE "PUSH" SHOT**

must you be forward for the impact.  
I hope that the reader who has studied  
these remarks may be able to go forward  
and prosper.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### THE "PUSH" SHOT

*Stance.* — Toes of the left foot pointing well outwards; ball about two inches inside the left heel. Hands slightly in front of ball during address; rather more weight on left leg than right.

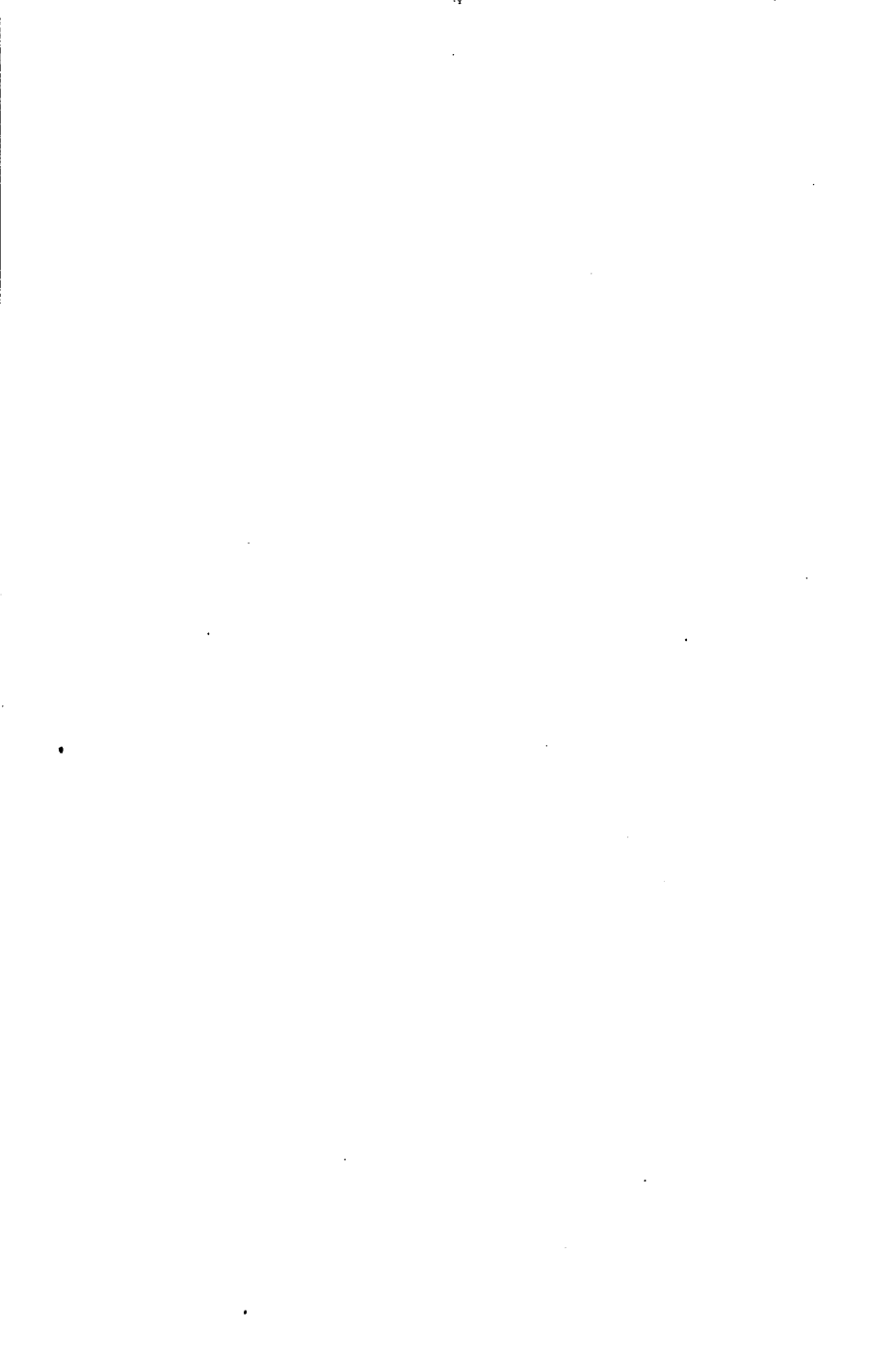
*Up-Swing.* — Remember that this is no ordinary iron shot. There should be no pivoting. Let the weight go well forward on to the left leg during the up-swing, and keep it forward until the finish. The left arm must be as nearly rigid as possible.

*Down-Swing.* — Aim as though you were trying to bang the back out of the ball; come down forcibly on it, and let

## THE "PUSH" SHOT

the body go forward as you hit. Check the follow-through *after* the impact.

Once you have obtained the correct position at the top of the swing, there is nothing to do but hit and hit firmly.



**THE USE OF THE MASHIE**

**BY**

**WILFRID REID**



## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

**F**OR the purpose of a course of practice, I venture to say that there is no club in the golfer's equipment which is so fascinating to use as the mashie. There is something alluring, something which generates constant hope, about the scheme of trying to pitch ball after ball on to a spot no bigger than a five-shilling piece and seeing how close to the hole each shot can be laid. Certainly there is no club which, properly handled, secures richer reward for its owner in match or medal round.

Until recent years, the study of the mashie was, I think, rather badly neglected by all save the leading players. There seemed to be an idea that almost



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

any kind of grip and stance and swing would do so long as they resulted in the ball being raised into the air. In recent times the club has secured proper recognition as one requiring special and exceptionally careful management, but to this day there are to be seen thousands of players who adopt such methods as practically preclude all chance of consistent success. Personally, I have been enthralled by the mashie since my boyhood, and have endeavored to understand it even more diligently than I have tried to grasp the peculiarities of other parts of the golfing armament, although a professional dare neglect none, and I gladly accede to the request that I should lay bare some of the lessons which I have learned.

One matter which is often overlooked is the desirability of always playing a mashie shot with deliberation. Never

## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

hurry over it. There is no need for express speed. In the ordinary way you are not going to attempt anything in the nature of a neck-or-nothing swipe at the ball. Many golfers ruin their mashie shots by setting about them altogether too quickly. They fall into position in an instant, whip the club back with a kind of excited snatch, and finish anyhow. Downright slowness is to be recommended when using the mashie—slowness in settling into the stance, slowness in the up-swing, and even slowness in bringing the club down again. The correct shot is made by accurate timing, and there is no necessity for a rapid down-swing, for the simple reason that there is no necessity for hard hitting. The swing must be smooth and unchecked at the instant of impact (beware of trying to poke the face of the implement under the ball in a specific endeavor to

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

raise that object; the loft of the club will do all the lifting), but do not in any circumstances hurry over the shot. By this I do not mean to advise funereal creepiness, but just deliberation — emphatic deliberation.

This, however, is a generality. Let us consider details. First as to the grip. For the mashie more than anything else I recommend the interlocked grip. It is important to have absolute control over the club-head, so that you can guide it, and the old-fashioned grip is apt to result in a certain amount of slackness which enables the club-head to turn out of position. Grip tightest with the thumbs and forefingers of both hands, and have the wrist of the left hand so much over the handle of the club that the knuckles of the first and second fingers of that hand can be seen during the address. The fleshy part of the left hand which is op-



**GRIP FOR THE PITCH AND MASHIE SHOT.**



**A WRONG GRIP.**



## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

posite the little finger should press very firmly on the handle of the club — so firmly as to be indented. Have the thumb and forefinger of each hand as close together as possible; hold tightly with them; strengthen the grip by letting the club rest very firmly in the fleshy part of the left hand already mentioned, and there is not much danger of the head of the instrument getting out of control.

Now as to the stance. For a shot of about 100 yards the player should have the ball practically under his nose. His eyes should be looking straight down on to it. The stance should be open. The right foot should be about square with the line of play, and the left foot pointing in a direction almost parallel with that line. The idea of the open stance is to enable the shot to be executed without much body movement; for the stroke,

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

when made properly, is accomplished mainly with the arms, and the less the body moves the better. Stand close to the ball, with the weight about equally divided. If you stand too far away, there is danger of pulling the club around when striking. And it is worthy of special recollection that the opener the stance the easier is the shot. Naturally this is a matter which must be governed in a large degree by the build of the player, but the point is an important one.

The club-head is taken back with the left hand. It has been mentioned that, during the address, the knuckles of the first and second fingers of that hand should be visible. The inaugural movement should be to turn the left wrist inwards a little so that the knuckle of the third finger comes into view. The fourth will follow; the main point at



STANCE FOR PITCH AND RUN SHOT OF ABOUT  
100 YARDS.



STANCE FOR PITCH AND RUN SHOT OF 35 YARDS.





## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

the moment is gently to screw this left wrist in the manner described. Keep the left forearm taut. There should be quite a tenseness in it. If there be any slackness, the shot will not be timed accurately. Take the club up without lifting any part of either foot from the ground. There may be some movement at the knees, but the feet should be fixtures, with the pressure (I will not say the weight) greater on the left foot than on the right.

At the beginning of the downward swing, the right hand, through the medium of the thumb and forefinger, which are gripping tightly, becomes the master hand. The left arm remains taut, but the right hand is doing the now all-important work of guiding the club-head. At the instant of impact, try to send the club-head straight through in the direction of the flag. As you do so,

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

let the weight go on to the left leg; that will help to facilitate a straight follow-through. And remember not to be in a violent hurry during the swing; undue haste often causes an undue tightening of the wrists, which should have their natural working powers even though the grip is tight and the left forearm is taut.

So much for the long pitch-and-run shot. For the short one, it is desirable even to increase the openness of the stance since, in this case, virtually no body movement at all should be permitted. Have the ball opposite the instep of the left foot, which should be pointing straight down the line. This will necessitate the right foot being brought round a little nearer to the ball than for the longer stroke. Most of the weight should be on the left foot throughout the swing (keep it forward all the while); that will help to prevent the



**FINISH OF SWING.**



**TOP OF SWING, PITCH AND RUN SHOT OF 100 YARDS.**



## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

body from moving. The swing may be a trifle more upright than for the stroke previously described; otherwise there will be no difference except, naturally, in the length of the back-swing. That is governed by the length of shot required. It is again important to follow through in a line straight with the flag; if you can keep the club-head in that line for a full yard after striking the ball, so much the better. With the feet close together, most of the weight on the left foot, the stance open, and the body kept steady, accurate striking is rendered comparatively simple.

For the longer shot, as I have already said, the weight should be evenly divided during the address, and only transferred to the left foot for the purpose of the finish. For any length of shot, I think that it is best to raise the right heel from the ground, as the follow-through begins,

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

so as to assist in the cause of keeping that follow-through as long as possible in the intended line of flight. In a general way, I would say that the shorter the shot the more open should be the stance, and that the body should be almost stable save for the fact that the right hip, which moved very little during the up-swing, should come well round for the finish. And remember to control the direction taken by the club-head with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, these two members being placed close together, with the thumb pointing down the shaft.

One of the most beautiful shots in the game is the cut stroke with the mashie. There are times when its employment is imperative if the hole or a stroke is to be saved, as, for instance, when the pin is only just beyond a hazard which has to be carried, and there is no reason why any golfer of ordinary ability should not

## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

attempt to master this valuable shot. It is best to begin at fairly long distances, which call for little judgment as regards the length of stroke. At the outset the player will find it quite trying enough to obtain the cut properly, and if he confuses his mind by endeavoring to judge distance to within a yard, he is not likely to make rapid progress. To play a short mashie shot with cut requires a mixture of delicacy and firmness of touch which might perplex the average golfer; the long cut stroke is easier in the sense that while it demands perfect accuracy as regards the manner of striking the ball, the regulation of distance is a less delicate matter than in the case of the short shot.

The player should stand well behind the ball, which should be just about opposite to the left big toe. Begin the up-swing with the left hand, the wrist of that hand screwing gently inwards



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

as previously described, but instead of taking the club round, push the arms away from the body as they ascend. Let them become positively refractory, so to speak; let them exhibit a tendency to get away from the body while the latter remains still. In this shot only is it that the arm-pits open as the club rises; in all other shots they remain closed. Most of the weight should be on the left foot; that naturally renders it easy to push the club away from the body during the up-swing.

It is mainly an arm-shot. Keep the left arm rigid and the left wrist taut. Any freedom in it will create ruin.

The right arm should also be firm, but, in this case, the left hand is the one that does the hitting. Let the arms go up and out without moving the body; it is a simple matter to pull them in again, and, if they come down in the same track as

## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

that which they occupied when going up, the face of the mashie will cut across the ball. And there will be the cut shot. Let the rigid left arm hit the ball; the right will do enough guiding of its own accord. For this stroke, it is well to address the ball with the nose of the club turned very slightly away from the spot to which it is intended to play; the left hand is thus assisted to take its proper place as the master hand. Given perseverance and careful attention to details, I am sure that anybody ought to be able to make himself a good mashie player.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### THE PITCH AND RUN MASHIE SHOT

*Swing.* — Moderately slowly or, at any rate, not very rapidly both up and down.

*Grip.* — Tightest with thumbs and forefingers of both hands; and let the handle of the mashie press firmly into the fleshy part of the left hand opposite the little finger.

*Stance.* — Open — the shorter the shot the more open the stance. Stand close to the ball so as to be looking straight down on to it.

*Up-Swing.* — Take the club up with the left hand; keep the left forearm taut, and the body as near motionless as possible.

*Down-Swing.* — Let the right hand be

## THE USE OF THE MASHIE

master so as to guide the club; left arm still taut; follow-through in the direction of the flag.

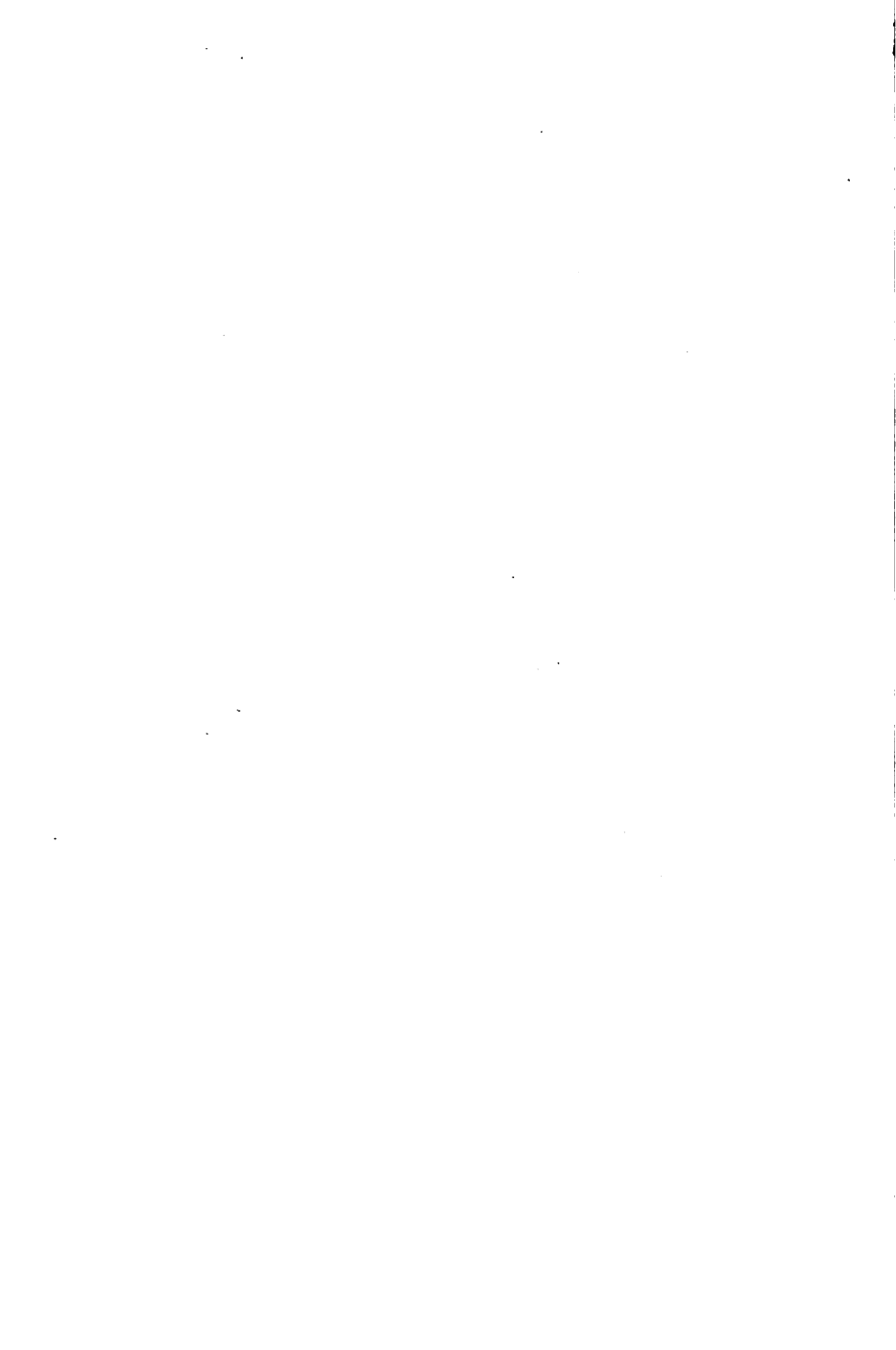
*Weight.* — Mostly on left foot all through stroke. Do not move the left heel at all; the swing is regulated easier.

## THE CUT MASHIE SHOT

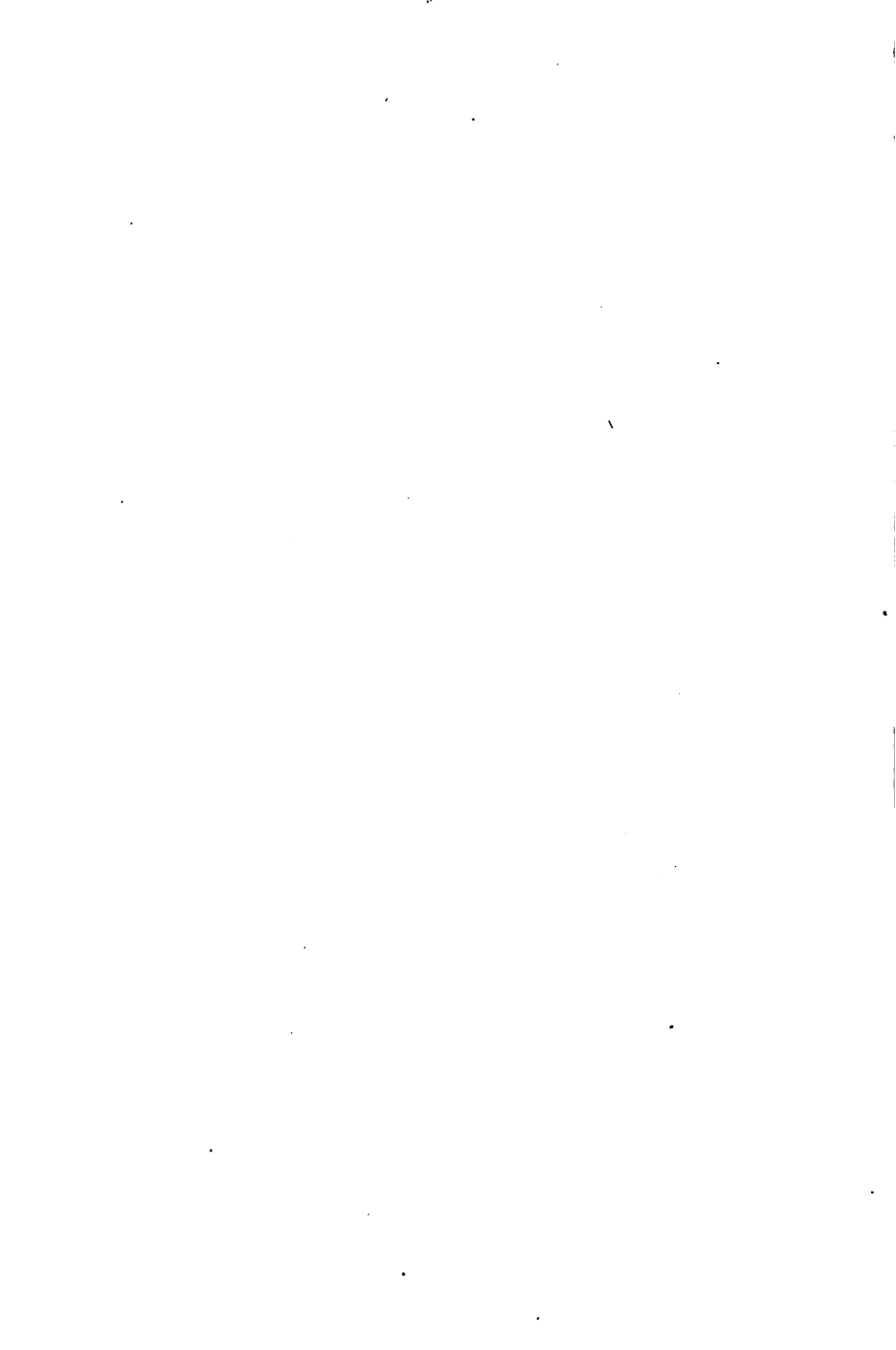
*Stance.* — Well behind the ball, which should be opposite the left big toe.

*Up-Swing.* — Push the arms away from the body in taking the club up, but do not allow the body to move. Have the left arm rigid and the right firm; most of the weight on the left foot.

*Down-Swing.* — Bring the arms in again, the left still rigid. Hit with the left arm; the right acting as a support.



**RECOVERIES**  
**THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY**  
**BY**  
**LAWRENCE AYTON**



## RECOVERIES

### THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

**N**EXT to the knowledge of how to avoid difficulties on the golf course, no form of practical skill is more valuable, I suppose, than that which enables us to escape from them at the smallest possible cost. We may be earnest and, on the whole, fairly successful in our efforts to steer and carry clear of trouble, but the fact remains that we do occasionally patronize the bunkers and other distressing places designed by nature and the links architects.

This is a very satisfactory condition of affairs. The greater the intricacy of the



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

course (at any rate, within reason), and the more often the player finds himself first in doubt and then in difficulty, the better the green as a training ground and the more rapid is likely to be the progress of the golfer in his quest of completeness. There is nothing on earth more dull or retardative to the ambitious player than an easy links. Personally, I had my education in the game at St. Andrews, where there are bunkers and other sources of uneasiness in plenty. I had my full share of practice in these spots (they are not to be missed by the person who, day after day, makes his way round the glorious old course in Fifeshire), and, in all humility, I venture to assert that I know something about hazards and the means of getting out of their clutches. Surely the experiences of our family at the seventeenth hole at St. Andrews would have been sufficient in themselves to

## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

goad anybody to study the art of recovering.

That seventeenth — the famous “Road hole,” and, in my humble estimation, the most testing golfing hole in the world — cost my father the open championship of 1885. In the last round he was winning easily. It seemed that nothing could prevent him from finishing at the top of the list. He came to the fateful seventeenth, and found himself in the dreaded bunker to the left close to the green. Even then he had such a long lead that it appeared impossible for him to lose, but he went from the bunker to the road, and from the road back to the bunker, and so on, several times, just as many had done before him and many have done since, until at length he holed out in 11. He finished second, two strokes behind the victor, Bob Martin. My father often talks of that inci-

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

dent, and never without reminding me of an even more gigantic total which I compiled at that self-same hole, although the occasion was not so important.

I was accomplishing a really good score in a competition of the St. Andrews Club. Going to the seventeenth, I placed my second shot nicely at the bottom of the slope, short of the green. I played a pitch in a greedy attempt to snatch a 4, where a 5 would have been plenty good enough for the occasion. Then began a chapter of accidents which were monotonous in their similarity. How many times I went from road to bunker and from bunker to road I cannot remember. I know that at length I was safely on the green in 14, and that I holed a putt of about ten yards for a 15!

The man who failed to learn something from such an experience, and his subsequent reflections upon it, would be very

## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

dull indeed. Two points which are more or less wrapped up in one another present themselves to the mind. The first is that when in a medal round you are doing a satisfactory score, it is not worth the risk of trying to save a stroke near the end by attempting a brilliant shot, regardless of the difficulties. It may come off, but, at such a stage, it is generally more profitable to play a safe stroke. The second is that, when you are in trouble, the thing to do is to remember the shots that are to follow and to determine that, no matter how little distance you obtain from the bunker, you will dislodge the ball in one stroke and put it into a satisfactory position for the next shot. Ambition in the matter of length should be sternly governed by these considerations; in most instances, it is best to settle down philosophically to the thought that you are going to lose

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

a stroke for the sin of getting into the bunker and resolve not to sacrifice two strokes through trying to do something phenomenal. There is always the chance of recovering the one by laying an approach dead or holing a long putt.

When the ball is lying clean in a bunker and a fairly good distance from the face, obviously the stroke is an ordinary one, except that you are not allowed to ground the club during the address. Consequently, nothing special need be said under this head. Now let us consider the process of playing, a real bunker stroke, when the ball is lying half buried or so close to the face of the hazard that there is demanded a shot which makes the ball rise sharply. It is a different shot from any other in the game. This is a circumstance which many players overlook; they simply walk into the bunker and take their stance and swing

## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

the niblick just as they might do on the course. There are so many varieties of circumstances that much must be left to the practical sagacity of the golfer himself, but it is a good rule in bunkers that the stance should be emphatically open — a lot more open, for instance, than that which the player concerned adopts for ordinary mashie shots. It is desirable to impart a certain amount of “cut” to the ball so as to induce it to rise sharply, and the open stance will assist in producing that effect. The body should be behind the ball, which should be just about opposite the left toe.

Now that we are in the bunker and preparing to hit, there is one very useful tip which ought to be imparted and digested immediately. As you take up your stance, be sure that you obtain a solid foundation for your left foot to

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

rest upon. The best way to play the stroke (so, at least, I think) is to push the club up and away from the body with a stiff left arm for the back-swing, and the natural tendency of that action is to cause the left foot to slide out of position unless it be very securely planted on (or in) the soil. The weight is going against it as the club rises, so that, in loose sand, there is grave danger that it may slip. You will notice that, when a first-class golfer takes up his stance in a bunker, he wriggles his left foot about a good deal before proceeding to address the ball in earnest. He is boring into the loose sand of the surface so as to find something solid on which his left foot can exercise a grip. He knows that, if it slips while he is swinging the niblick, the stroke will be ruined. I am sure very many shots are spoiled by failure to observe this precaution. The average



**CORRECT STANCE FOR NIBLICK SHOT IN  
BUNKER.**



**WRONG STANCE, BUNKER PLAY.**





## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

player simply disposes himself in the manner that he fancies and gives the ball a thump. It is certain that, in the ordinary way, there is not the same solidarity of soil in a bunker as there is on the fairway, consequently, it is important to go to unusual pains to render the stance secure. That slipping of the left foot is as frequent as it is fatal, and yet, with a little trouble it can be averted.

I cannot help thinking that many players aim too far behind the ball when they are bunkered. I know that the generally accepted principle for the shot is to aim well behind and bury the head of the niblick forcibly in the sand so that the concussion shall force the ball out and hurl it forward. That is a sound system up to a point, but numerous players select a spot altogether too remote from the object of their attack.

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

Much of the force of the stroke is then thrown away on the soil, and the ball may not even come out at all. On sea-side links, where the sand is generally loose and fine, I might aim an inch behind the ball; I would do so at St. Andrews. As a rule, the sand on inland courses is much denser, and I think that half an inch is enough to allow. The idea of aiming behind can be carried to excess.

It is necessary to hold the club tightly all the while — as tightly as possible. In this connection, it is a good thing to have the handle of the niblick a trifle thicker than that of any other club. The fact that, when you take the niblick, you have something unusually thick to grip urges you to grip it the more strongly. I always adopt this principle, and it serves me well.

The question of distribution of weight

## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

is governed largely by the build and other characteristics of the player. I think my own weight is fairly evenly divided during the address, and that a slight preponderance of it goes on to the right leg during the up-swing. However, that is not a very momentous matter. It is important to remember that, for the up-swing, the club should *not* be taken round the body. The open stance discourages such a mistake; but the necessity of avoiding it is worthy of recollection. The left arm should govern the stroke all the time. Stiffen the left arm as the niblick rises; that will cause the club to be pushed away from the body and will make the swing an upright one, which is just what is wanted. But beware of what is generally known as "swaying." The temptation to commit that fault may be stronger where the shot with the upright swing and

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

rigid left arm is concerned than in any other case, but it is even more vital to keep your head still and so avoid swaying in a bunker than it is when you are playing an ordinary stroke.

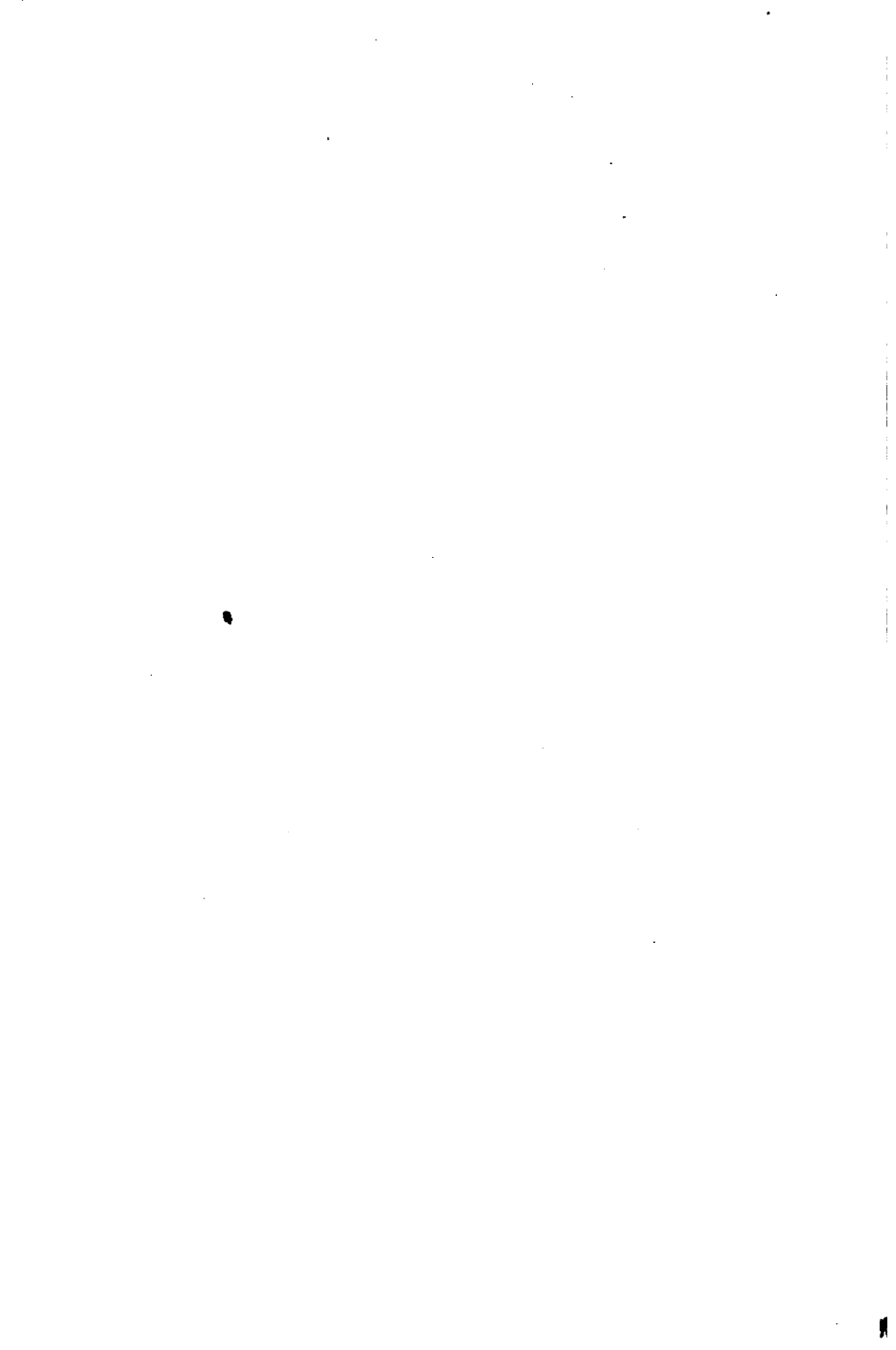
Assuming that you have performed this very necessary act of restraint, and taken the club back with the left arm stiffening all the way, you should experience little difficulty in accomplishing the down-swing properly. It is simply a matter of coming down with the left arm rigid. The head of the club enters the soil, say, half an inch behind the ball, and the rigidity of the member aforementioned prevents a follow-through. The niblick cleaves into the sand, and up comes the ball. If you have the left elbow slack going up, there is a considerable likelihood of your pulling in the club coming down and smothering the ball. It should be



**CORRECT FINISH.**



**WRONG FINISH, BUNKER PLAY.**



## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

a sharper, stiffer, and more compact stroke than any other in the game; the object is to cut the ball quickly and neatly and at the same time forcibly out of its retreat.

Even when you are hard up against the face of a bunker, it is not necessarily advisable to aim a long way behind the ball. In the *Sphere* and *Tatler* tournament at Hoylake, I remember that the opposing side were kind enough to congratulate me on recoveries which I made from hazards at three consecutive holes, and, on one occasion, I was right up against the face of a bunker. I played the shot by turning the nose of the club away from the ball (that makes one stand further behind than usual) and cutting it up without aiming more than about half an inch behind it.

In ditches, the chief point is to accommodate oneself to the best stance



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

that is offered, although the principles of bunker shots apply where the situation is such as to permit of the swinging of the club. For long grass and rough generally a very useful implement is a modified form of the wry-necked club. If the sole can get to the ball and despatch it on its journey before the neck comes into contact with the long grass, there is a fair prospect of obtaining useful distance. Strong arms and fore-arms are exceedingly useful, for tight gripping of the club and hard hitting are essential.

What is known as the mashie-niblick suits most people well enough in long grass. The stance should be an ordinary one, and a fairly upright half-swing should be practised — with none, however, of that stiff-armed pushing of the club away from the body which has been recommended for the bunker stroke.

## THE ART OF BUNKER PLAY

The great points are to keep your head down all the while (the importance of this precept cannot be overstated, for the purpose of shots out of bad places), grip very tightly, and hit for all you are worth.

The niblick is a useful club with which to play pitches off the fairway of any distance from 30 yards down a short chip. I often use it for that purpose. I have had my niblick for eight years, and it has only needed one new shaft in that time. It was modeled on that of Mr. John L. Low, for whom I used to carry at St. Andrews, and I would not part with it for its weight in gold. For the ordinary pitch, the ball should be opposite the instep of the left foot during the address; for the rest, the stroke is the same as that which we hope to play when we take a mashie. Still, it is as a rescuer

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

from bunkers that we make most use of the niblick. In times of need it is a friend indeed, if only we treat it properly.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### BUNKER PLAY

*Grip.* — Hold the club as tightly as possible. The handle of the niblick may be slightly thicker than that of other clubs, so as to encourage a firm grip.

*Stance.* — Open — a good deal more open than that for the mashie shot. Ball opposite the left big toe. Make sure of obtaining a secure stance with the left foot by burrowing that foot into the sand until it finds something solid on which to exercise a grip.

*Aim.* — At a spot half an inch to an inch behind the ball, according to circumstances.

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

*Up-Swing.* — Stiffen the left arm as the club rises, thus causing the swing to be an upright one. Keep the head absolutely still.

*Down-Swing.* — With the left arm still as rigid as possible, bring the club down so that it cleaves into the soil just behind the ball. The stiff left arm prevents a follow-through, which is not only unnecessary, but bad for this shot. The head of the club should finish in the sand.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING**

**BY**

**FRANCIS OUMET**

**OPEN CHAMPION, UNITED STATES, 1913**



## SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING

**N**OTHING else is so commonly bewailed in golf as inability to putt well. Who has not known the man who could have "broken the record of the course," "defeated his opponent" or turned in a better score than the winner of the medal play competition had it not been for "my poor putting"? With a great majority, it is the will-o'-the-wisp of the game. To-day it seems possible to hole everything in sight; to-morrow, the cup looks the size of an egg-holder into which must be driven a pumpkin or squash. The worst of it is that "to-morrow" generally is the day of a match or a tournament, the day of all days



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

when it is desirable to make every stroke count for its greatest value.

In no other branch of the game are all men born so "nearly free and equal." I can almost fancy that the putting end of golf was the product of an exceedingly fertile and ingenious mind, coming about in this wise: A and B were the original pair to play a game which has developed into the present game of golf. A was a mighty man who, with whatever crude instrument was used at the time, could deal a prodigious blow that would send the "ball" a comparatively great distance.

B was of more delicate mould. To A's taunt and laughter over his feeble efforts to propel for any great distance the object hit, I think I can hear B saying: "True, I admit I cannot hit so lustily as you; but I'll lay you a wager I can roll this ball along the ground



**FRANCIS OULMET PREPARING TO PUTT.**

**1. Study the line of putt. 2. Just before he putts, he steadies himself by placing the club in front of the ball.**



## SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING

and have it stop nearer that brown patch than you can.”

A accepts the wager and B wins it. Thereupon A is determined not to be so triumphed over and he tries again, — with the same result, for up to this time A has thought of nothing other than the distance he could hit. Now being quite humbled, he determines that in secret he will practise that more delicate stroke so that thenceforth he may not only triumph over B in the matter of distance, but in the skill of making the ball stop where he wishes, or at least nearer to that spot than can B. Thereafter, in their dual play, they decide that both factors of the game shall be included in their wagering, and eventually they conclude that the new feature lends an added flavor to their outings.

To-day I know of many golfers who

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

are only second or third-rate golfers, but whose skill as putters is all that keeps them in the rank that they do hold. From this there may be two deductions: one is that, knowing their deficiencies in other branches of the game, they devote themselves assiduously to practice in that department which alone can place them on a par, or near a par, with others who far outclass them in the matter of driving and approaching. The other solution is that some golfers are natural-born putters. My personal opinion, however, is that more men are good putters from practice than because they have any pronounced superiority, to begin with, over other men.

One of the greatest mistakes common to golfers who are known as in-and-out putters, to my mind, is that they are as flighty over their styles of putting as their putting is erratic. If

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING

a farmer were to plant a row of vegetable seeds on his land Monday and, becoming dissatisfied over their progress by the end of a week, dig them up and plant something else, his neighbors would look upon him as a little weak mentally.

That is perhaps a far-fetched simile; nevertheless, it is hard to understand how a golfer can try one style of putting to-day, another to-morrow and a third the day following and hope to improve that important department of his game. The trouble with him, as a rule, is that every time he sees another golfer get first-class results with a style of putting dissimilar to that which he most recently has adopted, he either consciously or unconsciously adopts that new style. Or, he sees one golfer do exceptionally well with a style of putter different from his own and immediately jumps mentally

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

to the conclusion that it is not his putting style, after all, that is at fault, but his style of putter.

All this may sound as if I had adopted one style of putter and putting at the outset of my golfing career and clung to it to the present day. I confess otherwise. Even when I say that I have had generally satisfactory results from the methods which I adopted last, I must admit that there have been times when I have been tempted to copy some golfer who, when I have seen him putt, apparently knew not the meaning of failure.

Before a golfer can putt, he necessarily must have some implement with which to do it, and I would suggest a gooseneck putter with a medium straight face. I have tried the putting cleek with the flat, or upright, lie, but have found it impossible to get over the ball so as to get an absolutely straight line to

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING

the hole. It has seemed to me that where you are not directly over the ball, that is, where you have the club-head extended away from you, the tendency is to pull the club-head off the line, and then it is speculative whether the club-head has the proper line when it comes back to meet the ball. More often, I think, it comes back from an angle and either imparts a cut or else is prone to hit the ball to the left of the hole.

Now as to the cut stroke in putting, I personally do not believe that the ball so hit will follow as true a line as that which is hit absolutely straight; except that the cut is serviceable where the ball may be lying in some slight depression.

In my putting I take a stance well over the ball, in fact my head is directly over the ball, and the latter is about midway between the two heels, the



## SUCCESS AT GOLF

stance being fairly open. I have tried putting off the left foot, but found that with this stance there was a tendency to "stab" the ball. Taking the club back, my wrists do not come into play at all, the backward motion starting from the left shoulder and coming back from the right, like a pendulum. It is the right hand which imparts the blow and I endeavor to get a distinct follow-through, with the face of the club-head at absolutely right angles to the hole. I do not attempt to hold a rigid position, but allow my body to go forward slightly toward the hole.

I do not attempt to hit the ball above the centre, for a half-top, the stroke which some claim makes the ball hug the ground and be more certain of dropping when it strikes the hole. Rather, my idea is that the follow-through in itself does this work. The club-head,

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PUTTING

at the finish of the stroke, is between three and four inches from the ground, a result which cannot be attained by a stabbing stroke. To sum it up, my idea is that if the ball were placed on a piece of tape stretched directly toward the hole, the club-head should hold, as nearly as possible, the same position with relation to the tape from the backward motion to the follow-through.

It is one of my mottoes always to be "up." Sometimes I fail in this, but this is what I have found through experience: That I feel much more certain of holing an eight-foot putt coming back after having overrun the hole, than of getting down a three or four-foot putt if I have fallen short on the approach-putt. In other words, I have acquired the habit of thinking, when making an approach-putt of some length, that if I go over, I at least have given the ball

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

a chance and, with nothing to regret, I can make a bold try on the come back. But when I fall short on the approach-putt I am apt to dwell upon what a coward I have been, consequently to have a feeling of insecurity over the stroke which follows.

My final word of advice would be this: No matter what your putting style may be; no matter whose style you may try to copy; no matter whose advice you may take about putting, —

Practise assiduously.

## HINTS IN BRIEF

### PUTTING

*Stance.* — Heels about 12 inches apart; ball midway between the two; head well over the ball.

*Grip.* — Thumb of left hand down the shaft of club. Little finger and fourth finger of right hand overlapping forefinger and middle finger of left. Left hand holds club and right hand gives impact to ball.

*Up-Swing.* — Movement begins from left shoulder; no wrist action; try to keep face of putter at right angles to hole.

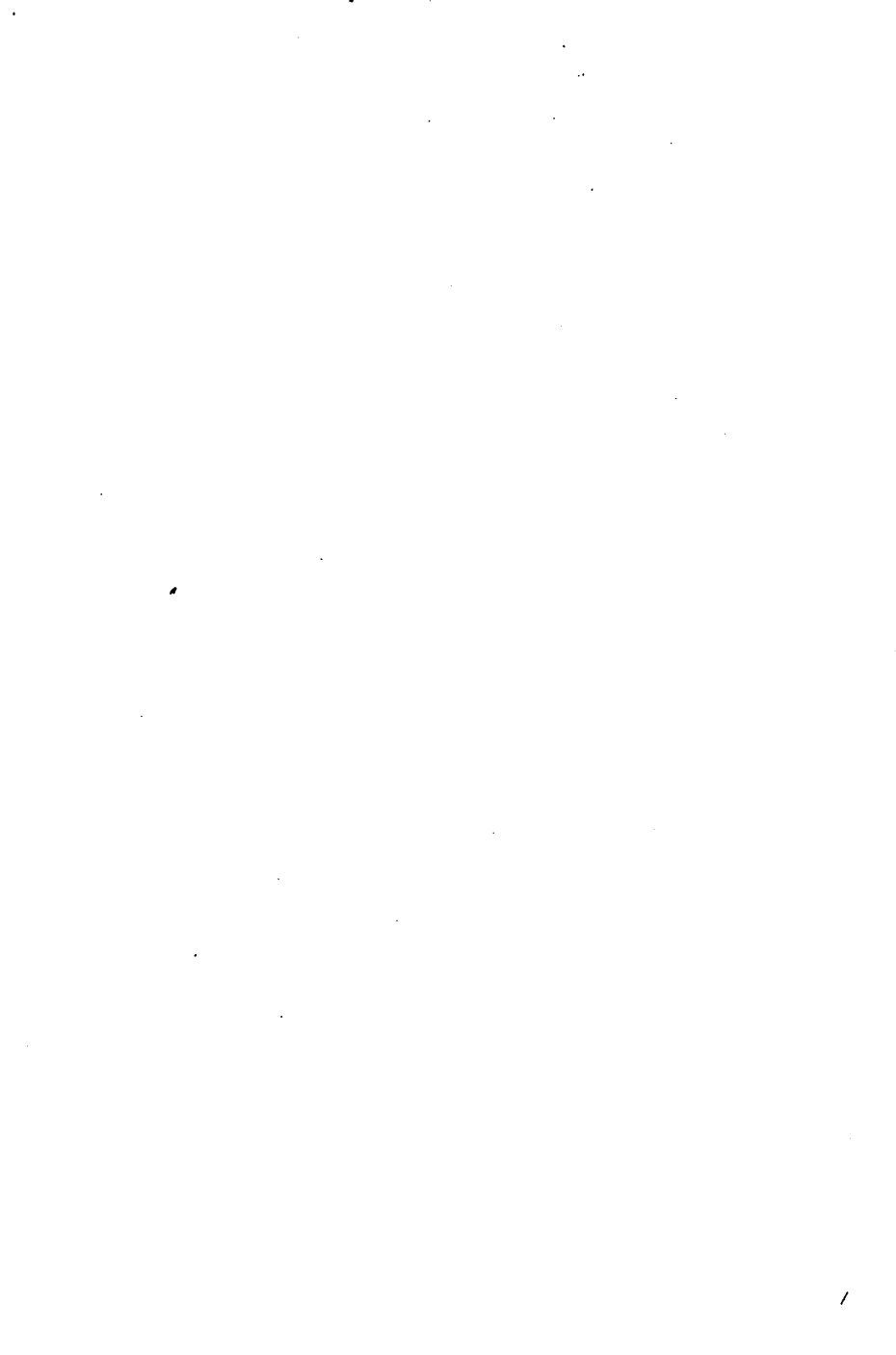
*Down-Swing.* — Club follows imaginary groove which it took going up, like

## SUCCESS AT GOLF

a pendulum; follow-through essential, face of putter stopping three or four inches from the ground after having hit the ball.

*Suggestions.* — Generally try to be past the hole, rather than short. It gives more confidence for the next putt. Try to hit the ball squarely and firmly. Do not study the line too long and do not putt carelessly. Practise!









*Roosevelt Country Club*

*Nov*  
*(✓)*

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